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*Corporatism Revisited:  
Salinas and the Reform of the  
Popular Sector*

*Nikki Craske*



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## Contents

List of Acronyms	i
Introduction	1
The Challenges	4
Corporatism: Myth or Reality?	6
Back to the Future: Party Reform in the 1990s	10
Transforming the Popular Sector	13
The Modernisation: Phase I	15
Phase II: The Emergence of <i>UNE</i>	18
Phase III: The Emergence of the Movimiento Popular Urbano Territorial (MT)	21
MT on the Ground	24
Sociedad Urbana	25
PRONASOL: A Corporatist Project?	27
Politics in the Regions: Guadalajara's Low-Income Neighbourhoods	29
Politics in the Neighbourhoods	32
The General Secretaries	34
Wider Issues	36
PRONASOL in Guadalajara	38
Conclusions	43
Appendix: The Structure of Movimiento Territorial	47
Notes	48
Bibliography	54



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## List of Acronyms

CNC:	Confederación Nacional de Campesinos (The PRI's peasant sector)
CNOP:	Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (The PRI's popular sector until 1989)
COCEI:	Coalición Obrera Campesina Estudiantil del Istmo (Independent popular movement in Oaxaca)
CONAMUP:	Coordinadora Nacional de Movimientos Urbanos Populares (Independent umbrella organisation)
CTM:	Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (The PRI's labour sector)
FCPJ:	Federación de Colonias Populares de Jalisco (The PRI's local neighbourhood organisation in Guadalajara)
FDN:	Frente Democrático Nacional (Coalition movement which fought the PRI in 1988)
FNOC:	Federación Nacional de Organizaciones y Ciudadanos (The PRI's popular sector since 1992)
FOPJ:	Federación de Organizaciones Populares de Jalisco (Branch of the popular sector in Jalisco)
MT:	Movimiento Popular Urbano Territorial (A new sector of the PRI)
MUP:	Movimiento Urbano Popular (Urban popular movement – generally independent)
NAFTA:	North American Free Trade Agreement
NSM:	New Social Movements
PRD:	Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Leftist opposition party)
PRI:	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Party of government since 1929)

- PRONASOL:** Programa Nacional de Solidaridad  
(Government welfare programme)
- SEDESOL:** Secretaría de Desarrollo Social  
(Government ministry)
- SNTE:** Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación  
(Officialist teachers' union)
- Une:* The PRI's popular sector 1990-1992

## Corporatism Revisited

### Salinas and the Reform of the Popular Sector

The installation of a new *priista* administration in Mexico, albeit with claims of fraud over the election of Ernesto Zedillo as President with some 50% of the vote,<sup>1</sup> provides an opportune moment to assess the success of the party reform project between 1988-1994. The election of Carlos Salinas de Gortari to the Mexican presidency in July 1988 was remarkable for many reasons. The most outstanding feature of his victory was the narrow margin he was awarded in the final analysis – 50.36% of the votes. This bare majority was a massive blow to a party accustomed to gaining 70% or more in presidential elections, and was all the more significant since large sections of the electorate did not believe the results. It remains a moot point whether Salinas beat his closest rival, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the coalition FDN (*Frente Democrático Nacional*), but it is widely accepted that he did not obtain the majority with which he was awarded the presidency in 1988. Furthermore, not only was the PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*) vote the lowest officially recorded, but the abstention rate was the highest; thus, the actual numbers of Mexicans supporting the incoming president at his inauguration, even by official estimates, was less than 30%.<sup>2</sup> The *priista* political machine that had succeeded in turning out the vote on most occasions had failed on this occasion and had been shown wanting in a spectacular way.<sup>3</sup> Given this scenario, the argument for party reform appeared irrefutable if the regime was to recoup its lost legitimacy.<sup>4</sup> The party *in* government (to distinguish between the now unpopular phrase amongst PRI politicians, ‘the government party’) was losing its edge over other political parties and, given the presidentialist character of the regime and the relationship between government and party, the reform had to be instigated by the *federal* president rather than the party president. The popular protest votes on the left and the business community on the right had indicated that gaps had appeared on both sides of the political divide; for the first time the PRI was under attack by organised groups from both sides, rather than just the right as was customary (Morris, 1992).

Mexico is frequently referred to as a state corporatist system with the ruling party controlling the terrain of corporatism (see below). Thus, if Mexico is to become a genuinely competitive pluri-party system, the PRI has to transform itself into a party able to compete on those terms. Consequently, corporatism has to be either disbanded or transferred to another non-party terrain. There are those who would argue that PRONASOL (Programa Nacional de Solidaridad), the poverty alleviation and social welfare programme, represents an opportunity for such a transfer (Lomelí, 1993); certainly Solidarity, as it is popularly known, has been useful in reinforcing the party reform programme as will be seen below.

The 1988 elections seemed to indicate that the democratisation sweeping the region since 1979 was at last having an impact on Mexico, which was also seen to be liberalising, both economically and politically. The debate around political reform has also included a discussion of citizenship and the possible consolidation of civil society. In the Mexican context this necessarily entails an examination of the clientelistic networks which have smoothed the system's functioning for decades. It has been suggested that the differing degrees of political liberalisation evident in the country point to three emerging typologies: the authoritarian clientelism of old, semi-clientelism and pluralism (Fox, 1994). Fox argues that there is evidence which may suggest a slow democratisation towards pluralism seen in other countries. However, the lack of consistent change has led others to speculate about the renewal of authoritarian corporatism. At the outset of the Salinas administration commentators were interested in the possible rise of neo-corporatism or modern corporatism (Bizberg, 1993; Harvey 1993), but, at the same time, the debate focusing on the possibility of 'democratisation' or political liberalisation seemed implicitly to assume that democratisation necessarily means a shift to a liberal/pluralist system rather than a shift to societal corporatism where the corporate groups would be constituted from below. Where there have been indications in this direction, e.g. the linking of the Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD), the successor to the FDN, with independent peasant groups (Harvey, 1990), it is used as evidence that the political culture is so steeped in corporatist traditions that the democratisation project is almost doomed before it begins. The emphasis on the liberal, pluralist model is reinforced by the supposed link between economic liberalism and political pluralism.

In this paper the shifts in the corporatist project of the PRI during the Salinas years will be assessed and we will examine how these fit into a system where Mexico wants to be seen as a first world country.<sup>5</sup> However, I will be arguing that the political project of the Salinas regime consistently took second place to economic reform and that there was a continued failure to establish clearly the rule of law; consequently, the system remained highly arbitrary and centred on the president. As a result of this continued arbitrariness, presidential pressure to democratise the PRI internally was not seen as fixed, but open to negotiation and U-turns – many of which were seen during the Salinas years, particularly regarding party reform.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, I will be arguing that the reform of the PRI lacked a clear organising principle and that Salinas, along with his appointed General Secretary of the PRI,<sup>7</sup> failed to assert his authority over the process in the same way that he did in other areas; noticeably the pushing through of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The reform failed to make headway in the key areas of democratisation, the demise of clientelism, the control of *caudillismo*, the instigation of clear regulatory principles and the rule of law and it succeeded only marginally in promoting decentralisation.

In fact, the form of decentralisation undertaken helped to reinforce centralism in some cases by forcing change at the local level which reflect the wishes of the

centre (Eckstein, 1990). What we see instead in many regions and sectors was an attack on local bosses who are resistant to the changes promoted by Salinas in favour of the so-called natural leaders, resulting in the mobilisation of the old guard in defence of their vested interests. The stalling of the political project in the shape of a genuine reform of the PRI was aided by the opposition's failure to maintain the pressure on the President and his government. Whilst it can be argued that not pushing through far-reaching reform of the PRI might be politically expedient to a President who was committing his energies to a radical economic project, it left local PRI politicians in disarray and the most local branch of the party at the neighbourhood level unsure of what the party represented for them.

This confusion is exacerbated by the lack of clear understanding of the role of PRONASOL and the relationship between the programme and local government. The PRI had been fortunate since the opposition, particularly the PRD, has also had its own problems; nevertheless, there was always the worry that the low-income neighbourhoods could once again become problem areas for the PRI, particularly in the climate of political instability. The impact of these changes has also had a regional dimension. Different states were targeted in different ways regarding genuine elections, accountability of representatives and the distribution of PRONASOL's resources, all of which have had an impact on relations between local *priistas* and Mexico City reformers.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the continued arbitrariness reinforced centralism, allowing the president more scope for shifting local politicians who refused to toe his line by using PRONASOL to leapfrog local PRI politicians.

The aim in this paper is to analyse the extent and direction of party reform by examining the interface between central and local authorities, and how the changes are having an impact on the ground. First, we will assess the challenges facing Salinas at his inauguration before concentrating on corporatism itself. This discussion will begin with an analysis of the utility of the concept of corporatism, both as a manner of describing the 'traditional' Mexican political system and as a way of understanding the changes currently taking place. This will be followed by an examination of the reorganisation of the party's Popular Sector as it was changed to usher in new democratic structures only to be returned to its original form within two years. With an analysis of how this has worked at the local level through an examination of the shifts at municipal level in Guadalajara, we will see how these changes have been felt at the community level allowing us to assess the gap between the elite plans and the grassroots reality, as well as the tensions between different party and government institutions, notably PRONASOL.

## The Challenges

Salinas embarked on his *sexenio* facing a good many challenges, some which he had to confront immediately. The realignment as the economy shifted from import substitution industrialisation (ISI) to export oriented industrialisation (EOI) had created a new economic environment of privatisation and a reduced role for the state (Morris, 1992). Since Salinas was clearly committed to liberalising the economy, a major problem was how to mitigate the contradiction between the economic model and social needs, especially since the austerity measures of the 1980s had helped fuel the popular protests which contributed to undermining the PRI's hegemony in 1988. Amongst the challenges, we can identify a need to restructure the unions, address the problems of social inequality which would be compounded by substantial rural-urban population shifts in the wake of NAFTA, the need to act on the increasingly important issue of human rights, the pressure to increase productivity in the industrial and agricultural sectors, lack of investment, the need to consider church-state relations and the pressure for electoral reform; much of this implicitly meant assessing the role of the PRI itself.

However, it was not just these material issues; Salinas also had to deal with a challenge of rhetoric and discourse. The President had to incorporate the growing rhetoric on citizenship and democratisation, which took the issues beyond the narrow realm of formal institutions and which had formed the basis of many opposition demands; most particularly he had to address the issue of rights over favours. The demand-making by popular movements during the 1980s had become politicised and the protestors had gone on to promote citizens' rights rather than clientelistic favours, clearly showing that material goods alone no longer satisfied many Mexicans, who now wanted accountable representatives; the old order of authoritarian clientelism was showing the strain.<sup>9</sup> The response of the in-coming administration to the challenges and pressures facing it have been multiple, with economic reform being prioritised. Whilst the economy was no longer in the deep crisis of 1982, there remained many serious issues to be confronted.<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, in response to the popular protest organisation, the government needed to tackle service provision, unemployment and housing; even in official statistics it is recognised that about a third of Mexicans live in poverty. In response to these pressures, Salinas chose the following areas for attack: the economic model, which was to underpin all other social and political reform, consisted of an enthusiastic embracing of neo-liberal economic policies, possibly best illustrated by the massive campaign around the signing of NAFTA. On the social front an effort was made to undermine the strength of urban popular movements with the establishment of PRONASOL, aiming to show that the government was tackling questions of social inequality. Finally, directly

institutional political questions were tackled with three electoral reforms and the reorganisation of the corporatist structures of the PRI.<sup>11</sup>

Whilst Salinas was lauded for his economic management of the country, political successes were less easy to identify. At the same time, the pressure for political liberalisation eased, with the disarray of the opposition, particularly on the left, and the relative quiescence of civil society after the mobilisations of the 1980s, the events in Chiapas in 1994 notwithstanding. Furthermore, the government social welfare programme, PRONASOL, succeeded in reducing some of the strains coming from demands for services. It could be argued that ideally Salinas would have liked to see the demise of the corporate structures of the PRI, indicated by his rhetoric of 'party of individuals', but that he was unwilling to embark on this high risk strategy when he still needed the old-guard's support for voter mobilisation and a quiescent labour force during economic liberalisation. Equally, it is possible to see the advantages of not attacking the corporate structures directly since they appeared to be withering away anyway; over the previous two *sexenios* the number of top politicians to have come through the corporate structures had decreased and Salinas himself was not a 'party man' – nor is his successor Zedillo. However, we must be wary about any notions about the natural demise of corporatism; whilst it has apparently become less important for career politicians and the party has been weakened, corporate structures were being revitalised at the base during the Salinas *sexenio* as a way of incorporating the disenfranchised through PRONASOL.

Whilst moves towards political liberalisation could be identified, more especially at the local level (cf Rodríguez and Ward, 1994; Eckstein, 1990), there were also clear increases in repressive and authoritarian measures. In the latter half of the *sexenio* there was a closing off of access to decision-making arenas for popular protest organisations, the concept of the *convenios* all but disappeared,<sup>12</sup> the government exhibited authoritarian heavy handedness in its dealing with many labour disputes (Bulmer-Thomas et al, 1994) and, despite showing progressive tendencies by establishing the *Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos* (CNDH), it then showed a less liberal attitude by deciding that this organisation could neither investigate labour relations nor electoral disputes – two of the most contentious issues in contemporary Mexico and where there have been considerable problems of human rights abuses.<sup>13</sup>

It is evident then that Salinas confronted many of the challenges facing him in 1988, but it has been difficult to detect a coherent long-term political strategy. This lack of planning is consistent with the PRI tradition of *ad hoc* responses in the face of crisis. However, it seems difficult to see genuine democratisation (even of the self-limiting sort) when there are such regional and sectoral disparities, and when political negotiations force the population to accept the right-wing PAN as the only electoral alternative.<sup>14</sup> And had the PAN won elections, it is not clear that it would have followed policies to extend the notion

of rights to the socio-economic arena any more than the PRI, nor would it be any more the guarantor of democratisation.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the strong showing of the PAN at local and regional level has allowed some PRI politicians to use this as evidence that the PRI is committed to a plural, multi-party system; ie the very existence of opposition government proves the democratic credentials of the PRI. This democratisation argument will perhaps be supported should opposition state governments be able to instigate new electoral laws which will make it difficult for the PRI to reassert itself with electoral alchemy at the regional level; as yet we have little empirical evidence with the first gubernatorial elections under new state electoral laws in Baja California happening only in 1995.

### Corporatism: myth or reality?

Corporatism has been used to describe the political systems of many countries this century, with its first manifestation being closely tied to authoritarian states, particularly the fascist states of Italy and Portugal. However, it is worth pausing a moment to consider it as an analytical concept since it is not a monolithic notion, but one which embodies many variants. It is important to be clear what we mean if the Mexican political system is to be considered corporatist and what the current reforms tell us regarding its development in the Mexican context. Philippe Schmitter has given us the well-used conceptualisation:

Corporatism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organised into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognised or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of their demands and supporters. (Schmitter, 1979, p. 13)

Schmitter found it necessary to distinguish between two strands of corporatism, state and societal. Both correspond to the organisational structures outlined above, the fundamental difference between the two corporatisms being the way in which these organisations evolve. Societal corporatism is constituted from below when organisations emerge from within civil society and become too powerful for the authorities to ignore. Consequently they are given formal roles within the state, as happened in Germany and Scandinavia. State corporatism ‘tends to be associated with political systems in which territorial sub-units are tightly subordinated to central bureaucratic power’ (*ibid*, p. 22). Amongst the many characteristics attributed to state corporatism, perhaps the most important for our purposes here is that ‘party systems are dominated or monopolised by a weak single party; executive authorities are ideologically exclusive and more narrowly recruited and are such that political subcultures based on class, ethnicity, language, or regionalism are repressed’. (*ibid*, p. 22). However, in the



Mexican case, the terrain of corporatism was not exclusively the state but the party, with some groups becoming 'pillars of the party' whilst others are organised by the state, such as the business organisations (Purcell and Kaufman Purcell (1977)).

There are three key organisations which are organised within the PRI: the labour sector (the Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos – CTM), the peasants (the Confederación Nacional Campesina – CNC) and the heterogenous popular sector (formerly the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares – CNOP, now Federación Nacional de Organizaciones y Ciudadanos – FNOC). However, these are not the only organisations to represent these constituencies; there are a number of workers' centrals such as the CROM (Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana), the CROC (Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreros y Campesinos) and the COR (Confederación Obrera Revolucionaria), and there is a growing number of independent unions and peasant organisations, some of which have supported the PRI and others which support the opposition.

This has led some to argue that Mexico is not corporatist (Stevens, 1977). However, the majority of organisations engage in corporatist relations as described by Cawson (1985) and it has been pointed out that the fact that some groups have privileged access to the state resulting in others losing out and being excluded from the arrangement does not negate the corporatist character of the regime, as is the case in many countries (Williamson, 1989). Furthermore, whilst in the majority of cases corporatism separates groups, we must be aware of overlapping groups such as the women's sector and the revolutionary youth sector which are another two 'pillars' of the party which are underplayed. These could have 'dual members' (eg youth/CTM) but they focus on separate issues to minimise cross-sector alliances. Those organisations which operate within the PRI suggest a similarity with the Soviet 'monist' system where the 'constituent units are organized ... (within) ... a single party and granted a representational role within that party and *vis-à-vis* the state in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders, articulation of demands and mobilization of support'. (Schmitter, 1979, p. 16). Consequently the *ad hoc* development of corporatism in Mexico has embraced characteristics from both monism and state corporatism displaying its flexibility during its evolution. Despite this hybrid nature, it is still clear that the elite has used corporatist structures to organise and control society and whilst it may not conform to an 'ideal type', authoritarian corporatism is clearly a useful concept for an analysis of the Mexican political system and it is the re-working of this brand of authoritarianism which concerns us here.

The emergence of a form of corporatism is hardly surprising. Several authors have identified its rise with a certain stage of capitalist development: Schmitter suggests that the abrupt demise of incipient pluralism in favour of state

corporatism reflected the perception that social peace was key and should be fostered by repressing and excluding autonomous organisation rather than coopting it (Schmitter, 1979, p. 25; see also p. 38). As his macrohypothesis suggests (1979, p. 24), the corporate model was useful given the need to give Mexico a place in the capitalist system. Similarly, Williamson identifies some characteristics of countries which followed the authoritarian corporatist path, including underdeveloped economies where the agricultural sector was dominant; in these countries there was a marked immaturity of large national capitalists and a 'political system characterised by a dominant ruling elite or grouping and very limited mass participation' (1989, p. 42), which coincided with Mexico in the 1930s. The development of corporatism in Mexico led to the rise of a strongly clientelistic system where cooptation was the preferred method of control, but if this failed there was little hesitation in using coercion and repression. The PRI dominated this system of exchange, with most important organisations and individuals trading favours through it and its major resource being access to state benefits; thus, the party was at centre stage in post-revolutionary Mexico. Whilst the omnipresent character of the PRI may not have been as real as some of the literature might suggest, the corporatist tentacles were far-reaching. However, there were always pockets of discontent and autonomous collective action that momentarily threatened the hegemony of the government party and the idea of a *paz priista* idyll is far from reality (Knight, 1990). Furthermore, there were, and remain, significant regional disparities regarding the degree of effectiveness and penetration of the PRI's corporatist structures. These disparities have become increasingly obvious during the 1980s when the opposition groups have clearly illustrated their regional strength, particularly in the north for the PAN with pockets of support in the west and southwest, and in Mexico City and Michoacán in particular for the coalition FDN in 1988, which has roughly translated into areas of support for the leftist PRD since then.<sup>16</sup>

The corporatist system had already begun to show signs of strain by the 1960s. The system had used the vertical structures of the CTM, the CNC and the CNOP as the channels through which clientelistic favours could be traded. Whilst this might have been functional in terms of including large sections, albeit not all, of the population in the 1940s and 1950s, by the 1960s the numbers who were excluded were becoming visible. The discontent over the distribution of the nation's wealth was growing and this contributed to the student demonstrations in 1968 which gained mass general support. These demonstrations were considered threatening enough to be violently repressed. The roots of the current wave of popular protest and consequent undermining of PRI hegemony can be traced to the events of 1968. Many of the activists who survived the events left Mexico City for the countryside and poor urban neighbourhoods to work directly with the poor and marginalised. The success of the COCEI in Juchitán also owed something to the students' new strategy, reinforcing older traditions of independent organisation (Foweraker, 1990a). In the 1970s a number of localised popular organisations emerged in a variety of contexts; new independent

unionism, urban popular movements in many of the large cities where there had been a mushrooming of irregular settlements to cope with the large increase in rural migrants, and other types of collective action based around youth groups, women's groups, peasant and indigenous peoples' organisations. However, these were not a major threat to the PRI's dominance while they remained localised affairs, despite the fact that they were not participating within the corporatist structure.

The PRI's structures allowed officials to identify and pick off the groups either through repression or, preferably, through cooptation. Generally this had not been too difficult between 1940 and 1960 since many of the demands were for material improvements which the system could absorb by dealing with them selectively, and Mexico's growth during this period was very healthy; this was not so easy once the economy faltered. Furthermore, increasingly the groups valued their independence from both the political system in general, refusing links with political parties, and from the PRI in particular. Moreover, these independent organisations started to coordinate their actions in umbrella organisations, *coordinadoras*, which were a greater threat to the PRI's system of dominance. Since the Mexican state project is based on achieving hegemony through neutralising potential political opposition, the system is particularly susceptible to alliance strategies on the part of grassroots organisations (Foweraker, 1988). More importantly, these new alliances were showing how far the PRI had slipped in terms of its organising capacity and the degree to which people were falling outside the net. Whilst it had been accepted previously that those who were escaping were of little importance, generally being the poorer and least vocal elements of society, these new *coordinadoras* were giving them a new national visibility and thus political weight.

The PRI's organisational structure had grown in an *ad hoc* and uncoordinated way which allowed it to react to demands at the margins to absorb pressures. However, being flexible at the margins made it unwilling to organise radical change from within and the expansion of popular protest and the contraction of the economy stretched to its limits the PRI's capacity to absorb these pressures. Since the party had absorbed so many groups and organisations over the years, it did not have a coherent over-arching ideology or political position and, although it used the identity of revolutionary nationalism as an organising principle, this meant little in reality.

Despite the disparate way in which the party had developed and the need of each president to distinguish himself from the previous one by distancing himself from that administration's policies, the last two *sexenios* have shown more consistency (and quite possibly the in-coming one will too). This consistency is most marked in the modernising of the economic arena. There is enough evidence to illustrate that the Salinas administration in particular has made radical changes through massive privatisation of parastatal companies, the opening up of the

economy to foreign investors and free trade and the removal of most subsidies. Bizberg maintains that this modernisation is incompatible with corporatism, mainly because of the contradiction in the sphere of labour relations (1993, p. 309). However, this supposes that corporatism necessarily includes an agreement whereby labour has a principal role as one of the 'functionally differentiated categories', which is not the case, although it has generally been a norm particularly in Europe. His assertion that the modernisation process demands the dismantling of corporatism ignores the tendencies towards a reorientation of corporatism away from the party, whose reform is a project riddled with problems, as Salinas has discovered. Bizberg does suggest an alternative scenario of 'neo-corporatism'; this is not to be confused with the neo-corporatism in the general literature, which is synonymous with European corporatism of the 1960s and 1970s where the corporatist groups have influence in policy design and implementation, which clearly would not fit the Mexican case. His version would be to remove some of the prerogatives of the strongest unions currently affiliated to the PRI, but, he argues, this would still be difficult to achieve since so many groups 'have found in the electoral arena new spaces for political expression.' (1993, p. 312). Yet, with the increased casualisation of labour, the future of labour organisations is fluid and Salinas was keen to promote Mexico as a country without major labour disputes and flexible in the global market place. His goal was therefore to keep people tied to the political system and maintain political stability whilst carrying out the economic restructuring. During the Salinas *sexenio* labour disputes were generally not tolerated, particularly those organised by independent unions, and the CTM was shown that it had to maintain support for the government or risk losing its privileged position. In this way it was an important ally for Salinas in his restructuring project, which in itself will erode the CTM and other 'official' unions in a deregulated market. Consequently, if the PRI is to lose its dominant position, which appears likely in the long term, there needs to be something to take its place to aid political stability; thus, the shift of corporatism to PRONASOL, which can organise people into vertical, hierarchical groups focusing on the social rather than the economic terrain, as will be discussed below, is particularly important. It is increasingly obvious that the party structure will continue to be a problem area for the government, but a continuation of the modernisation project can be guaranteed, with certain changes which are locked in under NAFTA and a social welfare project which contains discontent.

## **Back to the Future: party reform in the 1990s**

That Salinas did embark on party reform is in no doubt, despite the lack of coherence this reform may have taken. However, it is not the first party reform to have taken place over the past thirty years and there is a continuous theme to these changes: how to get the grassroots back on board without alienating too

many of the old cadres or the middle classes, particularly young professionals. The two most important changes of the post-war period are discussed here to indicate the history of some of the current tensions within the party.

The first set of reforms which need to be mentioned were those enacted by the then PRI president, Carlos Madrazo, in the 1960s. He had emerged through the party ranks and was on the left of the party, keen to promote change which would take on board young people and 'natural leaders'. To invigorate the party, he wanted to introduce party primaries at the municipal level, but instead upset the clientelistic party setup of fiefdoms where the municipalities are the domain of state governors. Despite Madrazo's declared commitment to democratisation of the party, he too used undemocratic methods, such as over-riding decisions with which he disagreed and pushing through his own agenda. Inevitably his style and tactics were to have negative consequences and they forced a confrontation in which the president, Díaz Ordaz, had to choose between Madrazo and his opponents; in the event, the latter won, resulting in Madrazo being fired. Not long afterwards he and some close advisers were killed in a mysterious plane crash. The experience illustrates two main points. First, those who are supposedly committed to reform are also inclined towards building power bases; secondly, it is very difficult to change an organisational structure where vested interests permeate the whole apparatus as is the case with the PRI (Bailey, 1988).

The other major reform that interests us here is the Ley Orgánica de Política y Procesos Electorales (LOPPE) introduced in 1977 under López Portillo. The major aim of this reform was to combat increasing levels of abstentionism by creating greater electoral competition. This was to be done by aiding parties on the left to counterbalance the power of the PAN, which was the main opposition, on the right. The Interior Minister of the day, Jesús Reyes Heróles, wanted to 'create legitimate channels for opposition activity to prevent an accumulation of pressure that might explode in violence and reawaken what he often called "México bronco"' (Bailey, 1988, p. 113). As such, his reforms consisted more in expanding Congress and facilitating smaller parties rather than in reforming the PRI. However, there were those who thought that this would weaken the party. Furthermore, we can see echoes in the logic of the current reforms: PRONASOL is trying to fulfil the same task by removing the pressures created by popular protest organisations from the oppositional arena and bringing them into the *priista* fold.

Despite these attempts, there has been no general restructuring of the party since the 1940s, when it was finally fashioned as the Partido Revolucionario Institucional with just three confederations (the CTM, the CNC and the CNOP) after the military sector had been disbanded. The events of 1988 indicated that reform of the party was necessary, but there was no clear idea as to where that reform would go. Salinas remarked early in the *sexenio* that the PRI would have to become used to being a competitive party of individuals rather than the mass

party of government, but attempts to loosen the corporatist ties proved as difficult in the late 1980s as they had been in the 1960s. The problems still centred on the tensions between the regions and the centre, the balance of power between the different sectors of the party and finally between the modernisers represented by the bureaucratic-technical class and the so-called *políticos* or traditionalists. The balance of power between the regions and the centre has always been under negotiation, with regional bosses winning benefits from the centre, but on major policy decisions the centre generally prevails. In keeping with this, Salinas and his cohorts instigated the reform process in 1988. Yet there was continual negotiation, resulting in a see-saw effect of reform followed by U-turns. Although Salinas was able to use sanctions against recalcitrant party members, such as the use of interim governorships to remove 'obstacles', the tight rein on PRONASOL resources and the control over economic reform, the traditionalists were also able to win concessions. Party reform in particular was an arena which allowed for a certain amount of negotiation where the different factions within the party jockeyed for position. However, instead of the previous practice of tinkering at the margins to coopt the new 'natural' leaders who had arrived on the scene with such force in the 1980s, the whole question of the PRI's future was raised. Given the rhetoric regarding the need to democratise, to take into account the demands of the grassroots and to be a party of individuals rather than groups, the party was being asked to shed its corporatist identity. But the question was then: could the PRI survive as a party in a competing pluralist system? Many observers thought not (Meyer, 1989).

As Morris correctly identifies, any party reform which was going to promote pluralism, as indicated by Salinas, was going to be predicated on the notion of decentralisation and the weakening of the traditional sectors. However, such a decentralisation masks a tendency towards the strengthening of central powers since any in-coming leaders would be more strongly associated with the president (Morris, 1992). Whatever the type of reform, since the PRI is not a homogeneous entity, any change would have to be navigated through the choppy waters where different interests competed: the reformers, the dinosaurs in the corporate sectors, the technocrats in charge of macroeconomic policy and the alchemists responsible for elections (Fox, 1994). As time progressed, we could identify a shifting of emphasis away from the party, but without its complete abandonment.

It was easy to decide that the PRI's brand of corporatism was not functioning efficiently, but quite another to know what part of the structure needed to be addressed first. Given the economic changes that had been underway since 1982, but which were to be intensified with Salinas as president, there was the obvious need to look at labour relations. Mexico was going to need a flexible labour force to confront the demands of the global economy in the 1990s and beyond. To achieve this was going to need a massive increase in productivity and the privatisation and/or closure of many state companies where the CTM and other

PRI affiliated unions had their power bases. Salinas gave a clear warning signal at the outset of his administration against potential obstructionist strategies on the part of the CTM's long-time leader, Fidel Velázquez, by ousting two other powerful union bosses, Joaquín García Hernández (La Quina) of the petrol workers and Carlos Jonguitud Barrios of the enormous teaching union, the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE). Velázquez did little to stall the neo-liberal project through the rest of the *sexenio*, but he opposed the 'modernisation' of the party; the CTM generally is antagonistic to the dismemberment of corporatism.<sup>17</sup> Equally, the countryside also required reform since Mexico needed to become much more efficient in food production, especially if NAFTA was to be signed (Appendini, 1994). This reformist tendency in the agricultural sector is best exemplified by the changes to article 27 of the Constitution regarding the *ejidos* and land tenure. Consequently, to push through rural change, the CNC would also be a focus of reformers' attention. The CNC had been under attack from independent organisations responding to significant discontent in certain predominantly rural states in the south-west (Harvey, 1990) and the west. However, despite these two pressing needs, it was in fact the CNOP which was most affected by the 'democratisation' measures. The CNOP was chosen over the other two sectors for three major reasons: first, the PRI was worried by the degree of middle class discontent (the CNOP had been founded to absorb the middle classes into the party in the 1940s); secondly, the sector had failed to coopt the alienated groups emerging in the poor neighbourhoods under its remit, and finally, the sector was considered more docile and therefore easier to reform.

## Transforming the Popular Sector

Although there was a clear decision to restructure the Popular Sector, the reorganisation was mismanaged from the start. The middle classes had played a key role in the electoral shock of 1988, and needed to be won over by economic reform, although their support could never be guaranteed. Salinas himself identified the *colonias populares*, women and young people as the areas which were causing the greatest problems. These were the people and geographical spaces which had given birth to dynamic *movimientos urbanos populares* (MUPs) a key element of the opposition to the PRI during the 1970s and 1980s. The reform of the Popular Sector consisted of four stages. It began with a traditional attempt to adjust things at the margins. This was followed by a more radical reform which was then extended in a third stage.

However, before this could really take off, the traditionalists had begun to fight against the changes and a massive U-turn took place. While these changes were occurring, PRONASOL was also being developed. Despite it being strongly identified with the Salinas presidency, we must remember that programmes such

as this have existed for some time (Fox, 1994) and that there are plenty of examples of similar projects in other countries (Graham, 1994). Nevertheless, it was perceived as a new project and it was finding its feet at the time of the first changes in the Popular Sector. By the time of the retreat, it was firmly established and had become a key electoral resource.

In the first stages of reform, it was thought that it was possible simply to bring urban popular movements into the fold by revitalising the PRI's neighbourhood organisation network which was affiliated to the CNOP; thus, a national assembly for residents' committees was established. Soon this was not considered a radical enough plan and in 1990 a new, more ambitious project emerged. However, this clearly showed the difference in approach of the modernisers and the traditionalists, or dinosaurs as they are popularly known. The former saw the reorganisation as the opportunity genuinely to modernise the PRI and make it more accountable, albeit within the constraints of keeping the party as the 'party in government'. The other faction wanted to strengthen the corporate structures and to return to favour trading, which had been undermined by the economic crisis and the rise of independent organisations.<sup>18</sup> Between 1990 and 1992 it appeared that the modernisers were gaining the upper hand. However, there was a U-turn in mid-1992 and by 1993 the 'dinosaurs' were in ascendency.

The return of the traditionalists coincided with a down-turn in the economy and the pressures resulting from the NAFTA negotiations, as well as a retreat on the part of the opposition making 'voluntary' political reform an indulgence. The fact that the PRI needed to be reformed regardless of the pressure from outside was ignored. Whilst it seemed to be accepted that genuine electoral competition will one day be a reality in Mexico, and that the PRI will find it difficult to function in a system where parties do not receive funding from the state,<sup>19</sup> there seemed little commitment to reform unless it is unavoidable. It clearly showed the PRI and the political system to be reactive rather than proactive and as such trailing civil society, which was embracing its own idea of modernity (Luis Javier Garrido, *La Jornada*, 10 January 1992). The longer the party fails to take the lead in political change, the more likely it is to disappear once a pluralistic system is in place. Below we will discuss the changes and how they demonstrate the failure to seize the opportunity for far-reaching reform.

The CNOP prior to 1988 had developed in a chaotic manner and had never been designed to deal with 'popular' organisations, despite its name. The aim of the Confederation was to bring the middle classes into the *priista* fold during the 1940s and the *colonos y comerciantes* (residents of the low-income neighbourhoods and smalltraders) were only included later, and then only included in the CNOP because there was no other suitable organisation. Indeed, as the Confederation developed over the years it became a catch-all sector incorporating those organisations and groups which emerged; when the banks were nationalised, the employees became members of the CNOP (although there



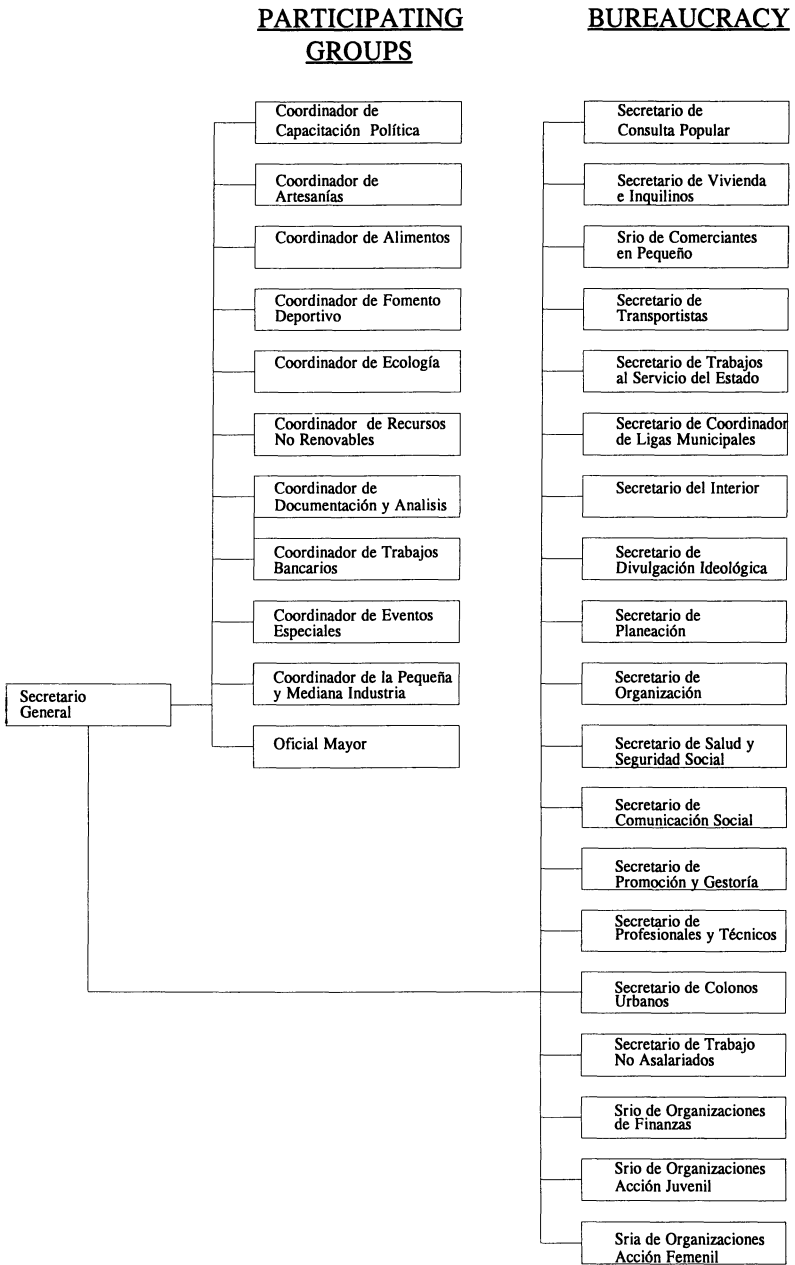
was a fight with the CTM over who would take in the new members). Unlike its two counterparts, the CNOP did not have clear limits to its constituency and thus forging links with the different branches was more difficult. Despite this, it was the most influential sector and the one which had the greatest number of seats in Congress, frequently having higher representation than the other two sectors combined (Bailey, 1988), as a result, in part, of its class composition. Figure 1 shows how the CNOP looked in 1988 after 45 years of existence. There was no coordination between the bureaucratic branches and the participatory groups. Also there was inequality in the organisational capabilities of the different subsections: the union and professional organisations were much more established and self-sufficient, capable of standing alone without party support, whilst the neighbourhood organisations depended to a large extent on party organisers and local leaders. They lacked the dynamism displayed by the independent organisations and were failing to attract new members. In addition, there were too many groups within both the participatory and the bureaucratic structures which reinforced the vertical, hierarchical ordering, keeping potential allies separate.

## The Modernisation: Phase I

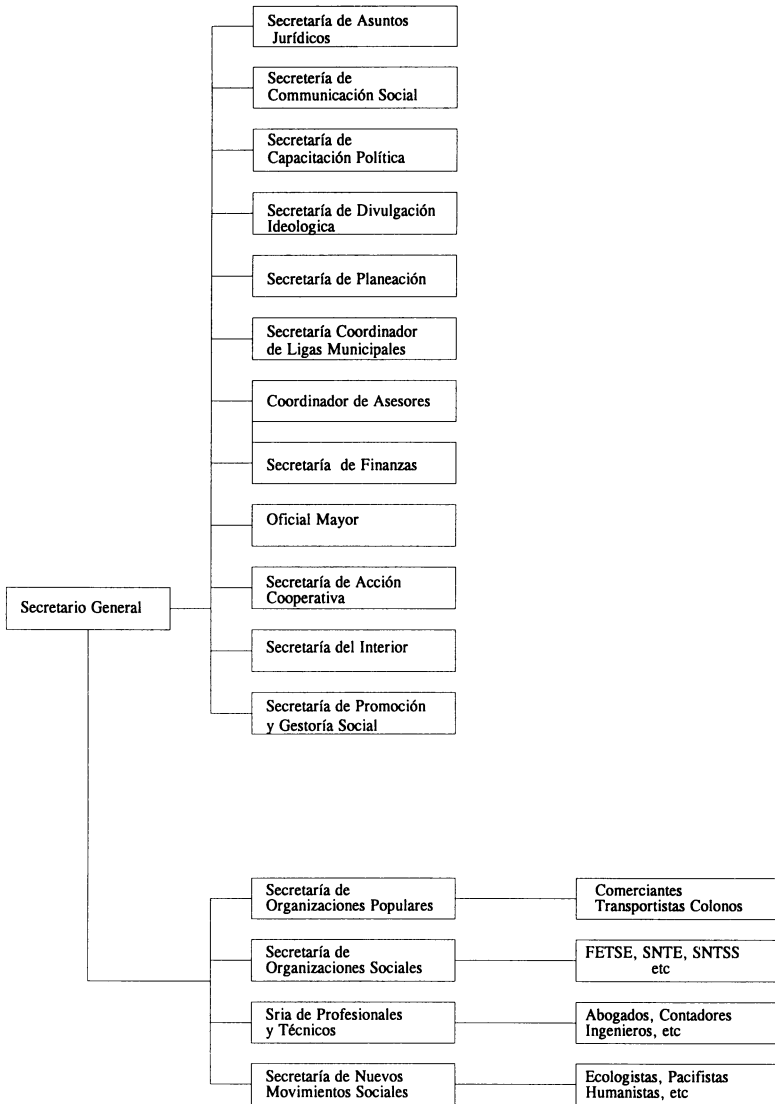
The reorganisation of the CNOP was not intended in the first instance to be a complete overhaul, perhaps because of the need to address the problems within the CTM and CNC. With *colonias populares* clearly identified as an area of weakness for the PRI, the first change for the CNOP was the development of a national organisation for the residents' committees.<sup>20</sup> The first national assembly was held in Acapulco in April 1989, and reflected the organisation of the independent movements which had held national meetings (*encuentros*) during the 1980s. The *Coordinadora Nacional de los Movimientos Urbanos Populares* (CONAMUP) was a successful umbrella organisation which had been a major player in the opposition to the PRI as one of the three *Coordinadoras*.<sup>21</sup> These independent organisations had shown the possibilities of grassroots participation in community politics and how they had become a threat to the political system by organising on a national scale. The PRI wanted to be able to capture this effervescence of political activity by replicating similar structures

The advantage of refusing to overhaul the party completely is that it has avoided confronting directly the corruption endemic in the system through clientelism. The PRI 'MUPS' could be activated selectively depending on the needs of a given community and traditional leaders need not be touched unless they were problematic. A further advantage was that, by copying the self-help tactics of the MUPs, it could claim to be open to popular participation *and* save money by promoting schemes based on partnership with the community contributing between 20-50% of project resources; PRONASOL developed this 'participatory' method further.

**Figure 1**  
**The CNOP 1943-1989**



**Figure 2**  
**The Popular Sector Reform Project 1990**



The new PRI Assembly for the residents' committees met again in Oaxtepec in September 1989. However, it was soon realised that it was not possible just to graft another new organisation onto the sector and that more radical surgery was needed.

## Phase II: the emergence of *Une*

The second set of changes was to counter the disequilibrium between the bureaucracy and the participants. Part of the problem now identified was the lack of balance between those branches dedicated to the bureaucracy of the CNOP and those dedicated to actual mass participation. It was decided that technical support should take a secondary role to the organisations 'on the ground'. Furthermore, it was decided to concentrate on streamlining the participatory branches by grouping together like organisations to allow for better coordination between the groups, but still keeping key groups separate. The pilot scheme is illustrated in Figure 2; the bureaucratic branches have been reduced to twelve secretariats and the participatory branches are clearly separated into four groups: popular organisations to include grassroots groups; social organisations for traditional white collar unions such as teachers and government workers; professional and technical for lawyers, accountants and engineers; and new social movements to bring in ecologists, pacifists and humanists. It was at this point, 1990, that the idea surfaced that there should be a branch dedicated to 'new social movements' (NSM).

This gives an indication of the reactive nature of the PRI hierarchy. It is very quick to appropriate fashionable terminology and discourse; in the late 1980s there was a burst of literature comparing the surge of popular protest in Latin America with the new social movements which had emerged in Western Europe during the 1970s. This comparison has since been criticised for importing the experience of one region and trying to transplant it into the distinct experiences of another.<sup>22</sup> The different groups which the PRI saw as NSMs were diverse; some were indeed new actors to the Mexican political scene but others had a history of participation, albeit not necessarily high profile. Thus, NSMs included ecology groups, pacifists, humanists, women, youth and senior citizens' groups, but not the neighbourhood organisations which for some reason were not considered 'citizens' groups'.

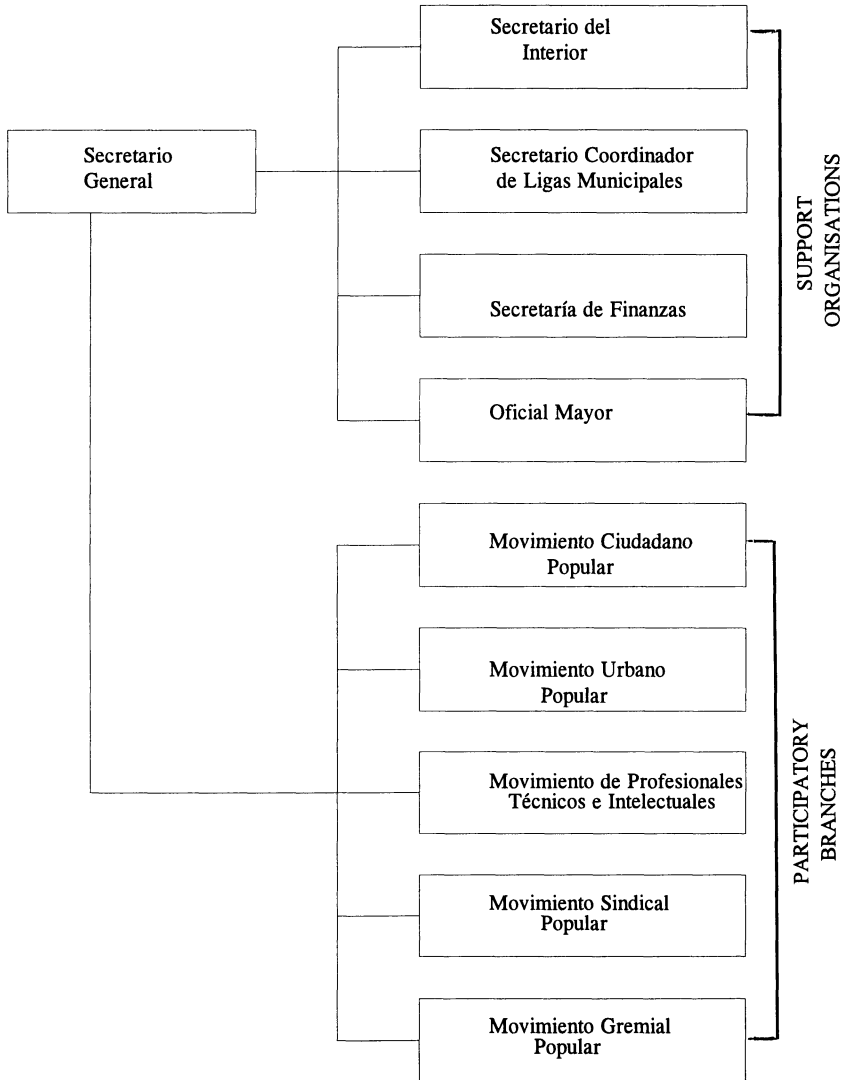
The development of NSMs allowed for the separation of neighbourhood organisations from youth, environmental groups and women; that is, using the old tactics of separating potential allies. At the same time, however, it demonstrated a lack of conceptual clarity about NSMs and citizenship which led to more U-turns during the reorganisations; for example, when asked what was new about these groups, the reply was that they really were not sure and were

thinking of changing the name!<sup>23</sup> The pilot scheme never materialised; in 1991 *Une - Ciudadanos en Movimiento* was launched. *Une* never meant anything, but was derived from the idea of *unirse*, and the slogan was 'Citizens on the Move' – again, trying to use the fashionable discourse of citizenship. As we can see from Figure 3, the support organisations were reduced to four and the participatory branches to five: public sector unions (including the SNTE), professional associations, technical-bureaucratic groups, urban movements and citizens' associations (the original NSMs).

The design in Figure 3 reflects the organisational structures of the MUPs, and as such enjoyed the support of some progressive members of the party, particularly at national level. Since the party had lost support in the low-income neighbourhoods and much of the organised opposition had emerged when previously non-engaged actors became involved in collective action to demand basic services from the government, the party needed to have a clearer strategy in the neighbourhoods and needed to be perceived as effective in dealing with these issues. It was apparent that the 'natural' link between the PRI and the government, expressed through access to service provision, was weakening and some independent organisations had been able to play off different branches of government against one another, frequently using national government as a resource against local PRI bosses and thus gain benefits (Foweraker, 1990b), consequently exacerbating the tensions between the centre and the regions. Whilst this has been effective in winning certain demands, it has also strengthened the system's further centralisation with local issues increasingly being taken to the centre to be resolved (cf Eckstein 1990). There has been much interplay between centralisation and decentralisation. The modernisation project often involved local decentralisation whereby community involvement, which developed local service projects, was encouraged since it was cost effective, but real power was rarely devolved. The need to address the efficiency of service distribution in the 'problem areas' reinforced the presence of a new decentralised PRI in certain situations, but this is decentralisation from the top which served to reinforce central power.

Although these measures were designed more to maintain political stability than to improve the living standards of the poor, there were positive benefits for many, particularly in the battle for power at the local level. In 1990 there was no national record of the level of service provision in the country's major urban centres, so the team at the *Une* headquarters set about compiling such a register. This proved to be invaluable to a president who needed to illustrate that the system could respond more rapidly to demands. There have been many anecdotes telling of the President belittling local officials by promising the installation of a given service that a local community had been soliciting for some time. Since he had been forearmed with information about services, these were rarely spontaneous decisions. Frequently, the service is made under the auspices of PRONASOL, leading to tensions between PRONASOL and the Popular Sector

**Figure 3**  
**Une: The Popular Sector in 1991**



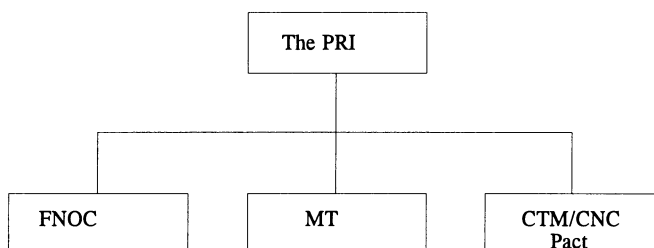
(see below). Consequently, the restructuring of the Popular Sector gave the President weapons with which to oust local *priistas* who were not so sympathetic to the idea of change. Although there were obvious benefits to the poor, it still left service distribution a highly arbitrary and discretionary process.

The revamping of the Popular Sector led to another related project: the *Movimiento Popular Urbano Territorial* (MT) with its roots in the first phase of changes. The attack on corporatism by the modernisers was in part due to the fact that the vertical structures it embraces were coming under attack from the new horizontal organisations of popular protest. The plan of the MT was again to emulate these horizontal practices focusing on the community rather than the workplace. At first it appeared that this would be a branch of the new Popular Sector, taking over the urban movements branch. However, there was an offensive on the part of the ‘dinosaurs’ within the Popular Sector who saw the structure of the MT as a threat to their empires since it was aimed at new leaders, and some began a stalling project. Many had already had to deal with the erosion of their status through the high profile of PRONASOL, which had done much to undermine their positions, and the emergence of another new organisation directed from Mexico City would further their decline. The battle between those demanding a reinforcement of traditional corporatism and those trying to push the PRI into a more competitive party deepened.

### **Phase III: The Emergence of the Movimiento Popular Urbano Territorial (MT)**

Although much of the rhetoric claimed that the goal of party reform was to make the PRI an actor in a competitive multi-party system, the reform of the PRI was still based, in the short-term at least, on sectors. The modernisers within the party were active in the founding of a new ‘social support’ for the PRI. Arq. José Parceró López, a key figure in the formulation of *Une*, was requested to develop a new model of collective action whilst Genaro Borrego was president of the PRI. The overall plan was to have three social supports (ie sectors): the revamped Popular Sector (FNOC); a combined CTM-CNC Worker-Peasant Pact and the new territorial organisation designed to undermine the MUPs; the *Movimiento Popular Urbano Territorial* (MT): see Figure 4.

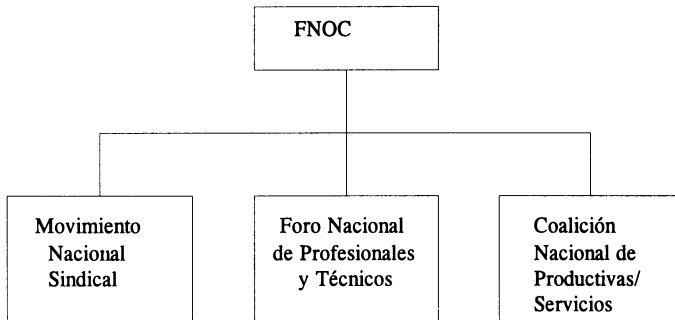
**Figure 4**  
**Proposed Corporate Structure, 1992**



The 'new' Popular Sector would be called the *Frente Nacional de Organizaciones y Ciudadanos* (FNOC) and in effect would return it to the old CNOP with a more streamlined bureaucracy included in each sub-sector (Figure 5). With this project the separation of the urban movements in the MT from the 'citizens' and professional associations in FNOC would be institutionalised. The fate of the MT gives a good indication of the lack of real commitment to the 'modernisation and democratisation' project and the degree of clarity of what the reform package entailed. José Parcero's goal was to develop a horizontal organisation that would be linked to the PRI in the neighbourhoods and whose *raison d'être* would be *gestión social*. In effect, he copied the forms of organisation that had proved so successful for the 1980s independent organisations; i.e. networking, community-based organisations, mobilisation around consumption issues (something that was also happening within PRONASOL.) The focus was the space of the neighbourhood which would be independent of traditional sectoral affiliation. Activists would invite people 'house by house to encourage the participation of those who were not in the party' (Movimiento Territorial nd, p. 2).<sup>24</sup> The National Urban Movement, which had formed part of the ill-fated *Une*, was seen as an important beginning and the MT was to continue its work but with a stronger, separate identity. However, there was an anomaly when the already established residents' committees were left in FNOC rather than forming the bedrock of the MT.



**Figure 5**  
**The Structure of the FNOC from 1993**



In the Movement's planning documents there is much emphasis on respecting the autonomy of the groups, of incorporating 'natural' leaders and of taking into account the increasing complexity of Mexican urban society. By doing this it was hoped that flexible structure with links to non-governmental organisations active in the community would be developed. These ideas can be best summed up by the following quote:

identificación con los propósitos del pueblo; arraigo en las nuevas organizaciones, apertura y aceptación, incorporación total en los líderes naturales: continuidad de un quehacer cotidiano que se gana con participación y esfuerzo el reconocimiento de la comunidad: imaginación para promover y abrir caminos que eliminen el burocratismo y, con gran convicción y compromiso, terminen de una vez con viejos esquemas de manipulación y de clientelismo tradicional (*Ibid*, p. 10).

However, there were some anomalies from the outset; Parcero wanted any group active in the neighbourhoods dealing with issues of service provision to organise within the MT in order to create a greater pressure block, regardless of party affiliation. But the MT would remain affiliated to the PRI and be a party organ as illustrated by the above quote 'going house to house', although the constituent groups of the MT could vote themselves out of the organisation at a future date.<sup>25</sup> José Parcero López did not see this approach as problematic despite the fact that the PRD never recognised the Salinas administration as legitimate, and thus PRD groups in the neighbourhoods would necessarily be against any affiliation with MT. Another anomaly lay in the fact that such a community-oriented organisation would be an obvious candidate for incorporating residents' committees, but these

remained part of FNOC.<sup>26</sup> The Solidarity committees would also be expected to join the MT since their remit was *gestión social* which would formalise the links between party and PRONASOL.

The goal of Parceró López, to break away from the vertical structures central to corporatism and establish a collegiate system with horizontal linkages, was a radical plan in the Mexican context. He was also insistent upon the idea of electoral posts for all, including the General Secretary, although he would hold the position in the first instance in an attempt to avoid the *dedazo*. However, with the PRI's XIV National Assembly traditional corporatism was revived with *Une* becoming the 'new' FNOC, reconfirming the original political structures of the Popular Sector. As a result, it was clear that the fate of a radical new plan of the MT was almost certainly doomed. In the event, the organisation was launched in 1992, but it immediately had to battle with the traditionalists within the party who saw it as another area for furthering clientelistic relations.

## MT on the Ground <sup>27</sup>

It was evident that during the 1970s and 1980s the groups emerging 'organically' from civil society were those based on spatial identification rather than a class-based identity, that they were concerned with *gestión social* and are therefore the groups targeted by the MT. (See Appendix A for a description of the structure of MT). Parceró argues that the central idea has been to open spaces for collective action within the party. There are two levels: civil society and political society. The first consists of closed, vertical structures, whilst those in the second structures are more flexible and are not affiliated to political parties. The traditional leaders have been displaced by independent activity and thus a new organisation was necessary. As such, they needed to renovate the structures and cadres: there had been more debate than management. Parceró believes that there cannot be a separation of the political and social; in order to deal with the social issues there needs to be participation in political questions. The idea was to let the communities decide their own forms of political organisation where the party chiefs would not interfere. By January 1993 there were 10,000 *comités de base*; it was formally launched on 14 February 1993.

Thus, the arrival of MT represented another *priista* organisation active in the neighbourhoods. First, there are the sessional organisations which are the party's basic units mobilising specifically around electoral issues; then there are the residents' committees which remain part of the FNOC despite the idea of separating the territorial organisations from the professional associations, unions and 'citizens' organisations', and finally the MT, which repeats the remit of the FNOC in the neighbourhoods. Add to this the presence of PRONASOL which cannot be totally separated from the PRI, particularly if linked to the MT, and

there is confusion regarding who is responsible for what on the ground, leading to competition amongst *priistas* and a saturation of organisations.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, the MT not only failed to break down the old structures and replace them with a less vertical form, but it also failed to keep its own rules regarding elections: Parcero was replaced as the leader soon after the inauguration of the MT on 14 February 1993 by Carlos Sobrino. This was widely interpreted as giving Sobrino a launching pad in his bid to become Governor of Yucatán.<sup>29</sup> Parcero then became Adjunct Secretary General of the PRI along with Fernando Ortiz Arana who replaced Genaro Borrego when he failed to survive the series of party reorganisations.

To add insult to injury for those who have been attempting to pressure for democratisation from within, during the National Assembly of FNOG in June 1993, the old cadres were re-established in prominent positions and as one regional official in Guadalajara told me '*los dinasaurios estamos ganando*'. The tensions which have been evident through this series of 'reforms' have frequently come from middle-ranking officials in the regions. Their futures are more secure within the traditional corporatist sectors, within a system they know; consequently, they have mobilised against the reorganisation. At present they appear to be gaining ground, but undeterred the modernisers have continued with projects, not least trying to undermine any independent urban organisation through grassroots mobilisations. In the following section, one such project will be analysed.

## Sociedad Urbana

Since the PRI had identified urban Mexico as an arena of support for the opposition, it launched an offensive to reassert its own position. However, given the reactive nature of the political system, there was a time lapse between the identification of the problem in July 1988, and the response: the programme Sociedad Urbana, launched on 24 June 1993. This is a PRI offensive with the coordination coming from the same office which created the MT and with Parcero López in his new position of Adjunct General Secretary leading the way and trying to continue with his reforms from a different base. This project was aimed at the main urban areas, the largest 150 cities which account for 47.7% of the population, with the idea of establishing the party's base for the 21st century; i.e. in areas where the PRI had lost out to both left and right in 1988. It was to represent the 'new politics' of the PRI again with horizontal organisations, aimed at citizens' concerns with micro-level agreements, personalised dealings and based on territorial units (*Programa Estratégico: Sociedad Urbana*, June 1993).<sup>30</sup> From the documents published by the party, the role of Sociedad Urbana is very much linked to the style of MT with attempts to forge ties between the party and

the emergent grassroots organisations. This is done through a mixture of hi-tech programmes, such as a telephone hotline, old-fashioned meeting the people schemes and, although not stated explicitly, the idea of coopting them into the *priista* fold. The party is to

(buscar) entrar en contacto con *los diversos movimientos sociales, redes, grupos y otras nuevas formas de organización* permitiendo esto la vinculación, la circulación de ideas, objetivos, experiencias etc, dentro de un espacio de respeto a las diferencias pero con la búsqueda permanente de coincidencias para fundamentar proyectos comunes. Esto le permitirá al *PRI fortalecer y profundizar su rol de Promotor Social*. (*Programa Estratégico*, 1993, emphasis in the original)

Thus, we see quite clearly that the project of the PRI in urban areas is designed to incorporate the independent organisations of the previous two decades, but is doing little to strike out with a genuinely original approach to opposition in the cities, and the independent organisations themselves have since changed their focus to electoral mobilisation. We can say in a positive vein that at least this represents a continuation of a project linking the emergence of MT with a party-wide strategy in urban areas, unlike the disjointed political reforms seen in other arenas, and that it complements PRONASOL. However, there is a lack of political initiative which is in contrast with the audacious economic project which Salinas launched when putting forward the idea of NAFTA.

By establishing projects such as MT and the Sociedad Urbana, the PRI is trying to forge a new relationship with social groups, but whilst it is also reinforcing the traditional structures, apparent in the XVI National Assembly in 1993, it is indicating that it is not confident that it can succeed on this front alone and that there is a risk involved in dismantling corporatism. The shifts which have occurred in the attempt to reorganise just the Popular Sector of the PRI give a clear indication that no-one has the upper hand in forcing through change in a certain direction. Despite the fact that a number at the top wanted a radical overhaul, even they appeared unable to imagine the PRI as a genuinely competing party – hence their idea of reorganisation still emphasised sectoral affiliation. The idea of establishing a series of neighbourhood organisations, which could have members of the opposition forming the basis of the PRI's grassroots structures, reflected the inability to let go of the cooptation and clientelism whilst grasping at the independent social movements way of 'doing politics'. Equally, there are many elite *priistas* who are not at all keen to dismantle traditional corporatism and see little need with the relaxation of opposition pressures, particularly from the MUPs, to carry out such drastic change. Since the president was distracted with the economy and appeared to be lacking a clear idea of how he saw the future PRI, the reforms stagnated. This lack of clear direction from the top might have changed if Colosio had been elected as president. However, President Zedillo, an economist with little history in the party and limited personal charisma, will find modernising the PRI as difficult as Salinas.

## PRONASOL: a corporatist project?

Poverty alleviation and welfare projects are not new in Mexico and they have changed as *sexenios* have changed in the Mexican tradition. The developers of PRONASOL learnt from previous programmes such as COPLAMAR (Coordinación General del Plan de Zonas Deprimidas y Grupos Marginados), PIDER (Programa Integral para el Desarrollo Rural) and SAM (Sistema Alimentario Mexicano) (Knight, 1994; Fox, 1993 and Craske, 1993), but it was new in that it had benefited from a careful examination of the successes behind the independent *Coordinadoras* of the 1980s.<sup>31</sup> Although every president has his pet project, Salinas kept a particularly tight rein on the development of PRONASOL; for the first three years, whilst nominally part of the Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto, it was run from the presidential office before becoming the central policy of SEDESOL (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social), one of the two 'super ministries' set up by Salinas (the other being Finance). There is no doubt about the effectiveness of the programme in electoral terms, although whether it constituted a reinforcement of clientelism or a case of 'pork barrel' politics remains a moot point (Molinar and Weldon, 1994). In many ways it is possible to argue that PRONASOL represented a democratic opening since there was the hint of horizontal linkages, access for the opposition and popular participation in decision-making. However, it is my contention that the structure of PRONASOL reflects the vertical, functionally differentiated groups identified by Schmitter (see above), but with the concentration of corporatist structures at the lower and intermediate stages. This concentration reinforces the trend of top politicians emerging through ranks other than the party whilst mass demand-making is controlled through these structures at the local level. The main vertical structures are services, production and regional, with other projects including the *Escuela Digna* and *Mujeres en Solidaridad*. They are concentrated in low-income rural and urban areas and the different activities are quite separate. The targeted groups reflect those groups which Salinas identified as problem areas in 1988; women, *colonos* and youth, with added attention to rural areas which will experience sharp social dislocation in the coming years.

Within the rubric of services, where most of the urban projects take place, the modernisation of resource provision represents a way of making Mexico's 'inclusionary' corporatism more cost-effective by introducing the notion of 'co-responsibility', requiring that the recipients contribute between 25-50% of the cost of a project before it goes ahead. This has the effect of involving the community, aping the self-help projects so successful in the independent sector, and cutting costs for the government whereby the state no longer shoulders the burden of the total social, or even infrastructural, costs. It is also a part of the new rhetoric surrounding citizenship where a good citizen is one who shows 'solidaridad' with her/his neighbours and a bad one rejects this; obviously it is difficult to be against activities which improve the community's standard of

living, making opposition movements wary in their criticisms of *solidaridad* (Peterson, 1991).

The emergence of PRONASOL does not represent a shift towards neo-corporatism since this would imply an influential position regarding policy-making for the groups incorporated into state structures. However, it does allow for a return to some kind of social contract between the state and the masses, albeit within the bounds of co-responsibility. The role of PRONASOL is to maintain social peace during the period of social dislocation resulting from the economic project. The shifting of corporatism from the party to the state is an indication of the decreased role for the PRI in the future when it will be confined to more general electoral questions; it has already been observed that PRONASOL is overshadowing the PRI (Morris, 1992). What is important in this transitional phase is that in many areas the PRI and PRONASOL are seen as the same thing and the success of PRONASOL results in votes for the party whose strength is still needed at this point. As such, the project represents a modernisation of state corporatism.<sup>32</sup>

There is much debate about the role of PRONASOL in the current period of radical reform,<sup>33</sup> and certainly it is difficult to discern a clear unilinear trend, particularly in a country with so many regional variations. Although it is too early as yet to analyse the impact of PRONASOL on the 1994 election results, much of the earlier discussion focused on making the PRI a more viable electoral option in 1994 and beyond through judicious use of PRONASOL (certainly the 1991 mid-term elections were testimony to its effectiveness as a campaign weapon). The key to the reform of the PRI being linked to the emergence of PRONASOL is the nature of the relationship between the participants and the programme and the way in which it reconfigures centre-periphery relations, reinforcing centralism and the strength of the president without increasing the power of the party *per se*. Bailey stresses the way in which PRONASOL represents a *deconcentration* of power rather than decentralisation (1994), thus allowing for the reduction of bottlenecks and obstructionist tactics at the local level, but without devolving power. It also allows for a fair degree of local participation in the decision-making process regarding the choice of project, but there is always a strong hand from central authorities and the parallel bureaucracy which has emerged to challenge the old federalist structures.

The rise of SEDESOL and its importance *vis-à-vis* other ministries reinforces the role of PRONASOL as the new terrain of corporatism since it indicates its possible long-term existence – although this institutionalisation may jeopardise its ability to respond in a flexible way (Knight, 1994). However, what it loses in flexibility it may gain from ceasing to be so personalistic and arbitrary. At present it frequently reinforces *caudillo* tendencies and certainly reinforced the ‘ultimate’ *caudillo*, Salinas himself. Although PRONASOL has had many successes in terms of channelling services to many needy communities, albeit not

the poorest as many writers attest (Molinar and Weldon ,1994; Bailey, 1994), there are also new problems and contradictions. There are increased tensions between the centre and the regions within the PRI, leading at times to *priista* involvement in anti-system behaviour (Morris, 1992), and there are also tensions within the different branches of PRONASOL itself. One of the strengths of the Programme has been its ability to absorb activists from many quarters, including long-standing opposition activists on the one hand, who want to combat poverty, and technocrats on the other, who want to see more efficient distribution of government services. This has led to problems between some who work 'on the ground' and those who administer the funds, as will be shown below (cf Bailey, 1994).

### **Politics in the Regions: Guadalajara's low-income neighbourhoods**

Most of the reforms outlined above came from the centre and to a large degree from Salinas himself. However, the lack of consistency was a result of pressures from the regions where party members were not happy with what they saw as an attempt to undermine their authority and to end the traditional security of a party future. An added element of insecurity for them came from the emergence of PRONASOL. In many instances the activities of PRONASOL were in direct competition with those of both the on-going FNOC and the MT. The increased tensions evident in this *sexenio* were often expressed by local leaders who felt they were being sacrificed on the altar of democratisation and modernisation. Many of them are at best lukewarm about some of the basic tenets of the administration, particularly NAFTA and party reforms. It appeared to be the case that the democratisation which can be detected in the shape of accountability of leaders took place at the local level whilst concomitantly there was a strengthening of authoritarianism at the national level (Eckstein, 1990). They were suffering the effects of the 'deconcentration'. Increased centralism over the past six years is evident at several levels, such as the tight control over PRONASOL funding by Salinas over the first few years, in particular with little accountability over spending (Dresser, 1991), the massive rise in the number of interim governors and the increasing imposition of 'unity' candidates for electoral positions *despite* the rhetoric of democratisation. Sometimes called Solidarity candidates, this latter group was one of the issues most complained about in discussions with grassroots party members (see below). At present, local and regional party activists will only criticise central party policies in a veiled way, but as we shall see, their interpretation that the traditionalists were gaining the initiative and stalling the more radical party reforms has given the confidence for some to be more outspoken in their opposition to reform.

The tensions between regional and national authorities is well illustrated by the case of Guadalajara in the state of Jalisco. As Mexico's second city, which is fast

losing its position to the northern city of Monterrey, there is much rivalry with both Monterrey and Mexico City. Jalisco is a conservative state which has strong links to traditional Catholicism and is home to the prominent *panista* family González Luna (in 1988 seven out of eight districts in Guadalajara fell to the PAN, but the state at large remained *priista*). However, generally the local PAN has not been as dynamic as in the northern states, particularly Chihuahua. The local PRI politicians are generally of the traditionalist school and there was rumoured to be a lack of sympathy between Salinas and the state governor, Guillermo Cosío Vidaurri. Despite this, it has not been a problem state in many ways and the popular protests seen in other cities were not so prominent in Guadalajara.

The past two years have seen two important events which, whilst not political in themselves, had serious repercussions for the PRI. The first was the gas pipeline explosions of 22 April 1992, which resulted in the deaths of thousands and the homelessness of many more. Popular protest criticising the relief effort led to the resignation of Cosío and the municipal president, Enrique Dau Flores.<sup>34</sup> The event led to a deepening of the involvement of PRONASOL in the city as well as subsequent tensions between its regional and federal branches (see below).

The second event was the assassination of the city's Cardinal, Juan Jesús Posada Ocampo, by supposed drug barons at the airport when he was 'mistaken' for a drug trafficker. Although there were many rumours about the involvement of political figures and links between politicians and drugs gangs, what was more damaging was that nobody believed the truth about his death would ever be discovered. This was a reflection of the absence of due process where an investigation would be carried out to the end no matter what the consequences.<sup>35</sup>

As a result of these two incidents, the local PRI felt itself to be under seige, and, in the aftermath, local *priistas* felt that they had been abandoned by Mexico City. Salinas arrived in the city shortly after the explosions in 1992 and undermined the authority of regional and local bodies; a few days later Cosío asked for indefinite leave of absence (*licencia*). Many saw this episode as another case of the centre stamping its authority on local events and displacing perceived 'dinosaurs'. Certainly it appeared that this was an excuse to get rid of Cosío who was antipathetic towards Salinas and reform, and at the same time have a convenient scapegoat to take away pressure from the state oil monopoly, Pemex, which was responsible for the leak that caused the explosion. Popular outrage at both the circumstances of the explosions and the relief operation resulted in the authorities, and thereby the PRI itself, being put in the spotlight. Consequently, two Mexico City *priistas* commented that they were not confident that the PRI could win a gubernatorial race if one were to be called at the time (June 1993). It has been events like these which succeeded in pushing the citizens of Guadalajara onto the streets to protest at the authorities' actions rather than other



issues. Local *priistas* complained that opposition parties took advantage of these events for '*proseletismo partidario*', which indicated the feelings of vulnerability within the party. It is also an indication that, although the party improved nationally in the mid-term elections and Salinas himself enjoyed personal popularity, the PRI remained weak and that random events could seriously damage its standing.

Given that the Jalisco PRI was perceived by the centre to be resistant to reform and modernisation, the tensions between the two have continued, although with a slightly different emphasis now that the reformers are on the defensive. The local officials acknowledge that the party needs to change and that the 1988 elections did demonstrate that it had been seriously weakened. However, there was an objection to the way in which the reform had been handled. Ironically, their criticism stemmed from the lack of democracy regarding the direction and style of reform. They felt that they and their interests were being sacrificed without due attention being paid to their own views. Frequently, there was a defence of class positions where it was argued that those who were losing out in this series of reform were the middle classes; the rich were to benefit from economic changes and the poor had PRONASOL, but the lower middle classes had no access to compensatory mechanisms.

Eduardo Rodríguez, General Secretary of the FNOC in Jalisco, believes that there has been a resurgence of corporatism due to the costs involved in turning the PRI into a party of individuals. Also, he believes that the changes so far have brought a reaction from local leaders who are not against the changes in principle, but who feel pushed aside by the process. Although Rodríguez says that many are receptive to change, his own comments show little in the way of progressive thought. He is not impressed with Salinas's decision to 'give away' elections. Instead, he believes that the party '*debe endurecerse más*' and sees the democratisation programmes against the best interests of the PRI. There is a belief amongst many local PRI leaders that people do not want to know about electoral politics, being more concerned about material well-being, and are happy being told for whom to vote. This was clearly *not* the case for the millions who voted for the FDN in 1988, but it might be the case for members of the PRI itself. There is a perception that there is a lot to fight for in terms of party reforms and that nothing is settled, while Rodríguez was obviously pleased that the traditionalists had come out of the National Assembly in June 1993 on top.<sup>36</sup> Although he stated that he wanted change, his suggestions were that the party should revamp the old system rather than pursue the reformist path politically and neo-liberal policies economically. The loss of support for the PRI was explained as being due to the natural exhaustion of militants in a party which has been in power so long. The party realised that the base was becoming alienated from the elite and the success of Cárdenas, the leader of the FDN and later the PRD, prompted the leadership to address this problem.

With regard to PRONASOL, there are two major issues for local party activists; first, the programme is moving into service provision, which was an important element in the clientelistic system operated by the PRI; secondly, and related to this, PRONASOL has been a weapon for the modernisers in undermining the traditionalists. Given the degree of funding for PRONASOL, there is a lot of tension between the PRI and members of PRONASOL. Obviously in practice it is not always easy to separate PRONASOL from the PRI, nor indeed is the electorate supposed to. The blurring of the distinction is symbolically reinforced by the use of the national colours in both organisations (cf Rodríguez and Ward, 1994). Sometimes the personnel of the two organisations overlap at the neighbourhood level reflecting the traditional political practice that allows party members privileged access to those benefits which do trickle down to the poorer segments of society. However, in those areas where the local PRI is considered an obstacle or ineffective, its members are passed over in favour of the so-called 'natural leaders' favoured by PRONASOL, who are frequently those who have been active in independent organisations – although this has not generally been the case in Guadalajara. Certainly in conversation with local and national leaders from all three organisations (the FNOC, the MT and PRONASOL), one gains a sense of the frustrations and jealousies. Parceró believed that the FNOC is dead and should disappear altogether. FNOC members at the local level in Guadalajara were not too worried about the MT, since its profile was low and there appeared little attempt to make it any greater. PRONASOL had enormous funds and no PRI elites, be they local or national, were going to criticise the President's central social policy directly, but they criticised the structures and processes it used. Furthermore, in the neighbourhoods things are different; many people felt betrayed by the PRI and confused by all the changes, considering them in the main unnecessary.

The modernisation and democratisation slogans, which were the key words at the outset of the administration, were never popular in Guadalajara. The view of Rodríguez was that the modernisation project had failed and that the shift from working with unions and associations to neighbourhood groups never took off. The idea of a worker/peasant pact was wrong and would have been better if the pact had been between the CNC and CNOP. In part his negative assessment is due to the fact that there were far fewer independent groups in Guadalajara than in other urban centres. However, it also shows the degree of antagonism towards changes and the disparity between the centre and the regions.

## **Politics in the Neighbourhoods**

Although the commitment to change at the local level may not be total, even the most encrusted of dinosaurs enacted party policy decisions handed down from the centre. Although the local Guadalajara leaders both of the PRI itself, Ricardo

Zavala, and the FNOC, Eduardo Rodríguez, display an antipathy towards change, nevertheless they followed through certain 'democratisation' policies aimed at the grassroots of the party. As such, there have been 'capacitation' exercises with party members from the *colonias* designed to educate members about the history of the party and to inform them about the changes (not easy given the number of changes during this *sexenio*) and what duties and responsibilities they have as members of the party. Interviews were carried out with a quarter of the regularly participating general secretaries of the Federación de Colonias Populares de Jalisco (FCPJ) to ask them what they thought about the changes over the past five years. Individual neighbourhoods in Guadalajara have residents' committees where neighbours meet, generally weekly. Whilst those participating at the community level do not necessarily belong to the PRI, the general secretaries of the committees participate in the FCPJ, which is affiliated to the Popular Sector. During June-July 1993 there were only between 35-40 general secretaries participating in the weekly FCPJ assemblies in contrast with the 80 plus who attended only two years previously (Craske, 1993). This drop in itself is an indication of the problems which were facing the PRI. When Zavala, who is General Secretary of the FCPJ as well as being the head of PRI-Guadalajara, was asked about the drop in interest he claimed that during the time of the fieldwork some general secretaries had been busy with other work for the party and that it was inevitable that there would be a drop in participation with a decrease in material need.<sup>37</sup> However, talking with the general secretaries themselves showed that the decrease in numbers had less to do with other commitments, and more to do with lack of interest and disillusionment.

The interviews were carried out with a mixture of the old guard leaders and newly elected ones who had been encouraged to stand in the post-1988 period. What was evident from the interviews was that there had been a tightening up of certain democratic procedures within the neighbourhoods in terms of more frequent elections and defining posts in the neighbourhood executive committees as three year positions when previously the time was indefinite.<sup>38</sup> This accounted for a number of new faces appearing over the past two years. This new democratic practice had extended to the executive committee of the FCPJ itself, which previously had been dominated by local party activists, and now had several representatives from the communities who were chairing the meetings, acting as secretary, treasurer and filling other posts. Yet beyond the level of appearance, there were gaps between what the party managers in Mexico City wanted and what was happening at the grassroots. A major problem was the political socialisation of the older members. The traditional way in which the party functioned made it very difficult for the long-term members at the base to adapt to the new political demands being made upon them. After years of 'passive participation', in which they attended weekly meetings but left any serious political mediation to the local and regional leaders, it was not easy for them to be more proactive in their behaviour making demands and being subject to new procedures. Furthermore, given the number of changes which occurred

over the previous five years, the members felt very uncertain about the direction of the sector and the party. Since the changes were decided top-down, there had been little opportunity for the grassroots to have a serious input. This is combined with their upbringing which left them ill-equipped to criticise leaders and their policies. Members complained about the mismanagement of the reorganisation and were universally critical of the idea of more reforms; they also found it very hard to criticise members of the party hierarchy by name, supposing they could identify them, for the mistakes made.

There are evident disparities between the PRI's two camps regarding actors at the local neighbourhood level. The modernisers want to focus on the 'new leaders', who they feel are potential opposition supporters, whilst the traditionalists want to concentrate on stopping any disenchantment and apathy among long-term members. The latter feel that the old guard could become opposition supporters if their views are not taken into account; as Eduardo Rodríguez commented about the reform of the PRI, '*la democracia no respeta a las dirigencias*'. However, even the traditionalists like Zavala acknowledge the need for some change. Whichever view prevails, there remains the problem of organisational overlap with too many PRI organisations chasing the same constituencies and causing confusion and resentment amongst local party activists.

## The General Secretaries

The ambivalent views of the local and regional party leaders were also reflected in the attitudes of the grassroots members in the neighbourhoods. About thirty per cent of the currently participating general secretaries (in equal numbers of women and men) were interviewed. The questions put to the general secretaries centred around the changes; why did they think they had occurred, which were the most important, had they been successful, were more needed? Most people seemed to think that the changes had occurred because that is what the national leadership decided, although one said that there had been changes because that is what the grassroots decided. Sometimes this reason was linked to the problem of corrupt individuals (never the party) who were only concerned with their own interests and not the common good. Thus it was seen as a positive move in that it was an opportunity to shake up the system, get rid of those who had been in power positions for too long and to encourage new blood into the sector. Many general secretaries seemed to think that it was a good opportunity to reinforce democracy within the organisation, particularly regarding elections for the positions within the committee. Thus, their analysis at one level was positive, welcoming reform and supportive of the changes, although their concept of democracy was constrained to the issue of elections.

However, there was contradiction between some of these answers and what they considered to be the most important changes within the sector. One commented that '*Los cambios han sido una tristeza; quitan la confianza que la gente tiene en los dirigentes.*' One of the founding members of the FCPJ simply answered that there had been no good changes, although the emergence of the MT had potential. A new addition to the ranks of general secretary, but a long time *priista*, commented that the sector had gained nothing through change. For many, change represented insecurity and vulnerability. Whilst they wanted to see improvements in standard of living for the neighbourhoods, they did not see how these party reforms would achieve that. In this context, the idea of change was viewed suspiciously and further change was rejected.

There was more dissent in terms of where the party was headed and what future changes might occur. Most members seemed uneasy about the idea of more change, commenting that there needed to be a time of consolidation before anything else happened. The only thing which was identified as needing change was the practice of having candidates imposed by the centre. This was an element of the PRI's arbitrary practices which had been reinforced during the *sexenio*, as indicated by the imposition of Sobrino in the MT and the 'solidarity' candidates. The antagonism towards this imposition was another illustration of the feelings of vulnerability at the local level. The general secretaries felt that they would not know the leaders if they were imposed and that they would be less able to influence them. So whilst part of their criticism was as a result of undemocratic practices, they were also concerned about the erosion of clientelistic networks. The change they wanted in this regard was a return to traditional networks in which politicians worked their way up through the party.

Given all the changes which have occurred during the Salinas administration, the general secretaries seemed unsure about the structures which currently existed in the neighbourhood, to the point that they were unsure about the name of the sector to which the FCPJ was affiliated and the name of the leader at either national or local level. They still identified more readily with those leaders who were involved with the founding of the FCPJ in 1975 who have since had different positions within the party at city and state levels. Questions about the identity of the leader of the Popular Sector were answered correctly only about 15% of the time; some mentioned Silvia Hernández who had led the sector during its shift to *Une*, but who had ceased to be leader a year previously (one of the casualties when it was decided that the project had failed and FNOC emerged in its place). Some mentioned Ricardo Zavala or Eduardo Rodríguez as leaders. As far as identifying the national organisation to which the FCPJ belonged, the answers ranged from the PRI, the CNAPS,<sup>39</sup> the MT, *Une* and simply the Popular Sector. This array of answers illustrates the lack of coherence with which the changes were made and equally the failure of the hierarchy to explain these changes clearly to those mobilising at the grassroots. This is a problem given that the party recognises the lack of informed cadres as one of its

weaknesses. It also indicates the top-down communication flow; had the changes emerged more from the grassroots or been debated in assemblies, there would have been a deeper understanding of the changes. The response of Zavala's colleagues about the confusion amongst the general secretaries tends to be that they were dealing with people with little education, ignoring the fact that generally they were people who had many years experience with the party. If they were unequipped to deal with the changes, that reflected as much upon the *modus operandi* of the party and the failure of the *capacitación* exercises as on the calibre of the general secretaries themselves.

## Wider Issues

The general secretaries were also asked about political issues outside the reorganisation of the Popular Sector. This included their opinions about PRONASOL, NAFTA and the concept of 'modernisation'. These issues give an impression of how the principal projects of this administration were received by party members who were divorced from the decision-making process. On the whole, the general secretaries seemed antipathetic towards these policies, particularly towards NAFTA and the notion of modernisation generally.

The whole project of PRONASOL was seen in two ways by *priistas*: either as another resource for the party to use, or as a way of ousting old party stalwarts who were no longer considered efficient activists. Below, we will discuss the views of the Head of PRONASOL in Jalisco, José Luis Mata Bracamontes. However, we will first assess how the programme functioned in the very neighbourhoods on which it was targeted.

The views of the general secretaries in the neighbourhoods mirrored the two opinions outlined above. Indeed, for many of the general secretaries the PRI and PRONASOL were one and the same thing. They worked together and frequently the same people participated in both committees; in the words of one, '*La misma gente participa en los dos comités; puros priistas en todos*'. On the whole the programme was seen as being a benefit to the communities, especially the poorer ones which were in greater need of basic services. Two general secretaries cited PRONASOL as one of the biggest successes of the *sexenio*. When considering the activities of PRONASOL at the municipality level, they thought that it was very useful, particularly for the poorer communities. However, this positive assessment of the programme was not universal. Some general secretaries thought that Pronasol was in direct competition with the residents' committees and that individuals had hijacked the committee for their own ends. Whilst PRONASOL was most strongly identified with service provision in poor neighbourhoods, there was a second element which was the productive side. This was an area which was considered to have failed.

At the municipal level one general secretary criticised the notion that PRONASOL had been of particular assistance in *Sector Reforma* which had suffered devastating damage in the wake of the 22 April explosion. He believed that the municipal authority rather than PRONASOL had responded to the crisis.<sup>40</sup> There was no mention made of *Mujeres en Solidaridad*, which is more active in rural areas, but many made mention of the schools projects (*Escuela Digna*) although it was suggested that the work would have been carried out anyway under a different name. Members of independent organisations commented that the *Escuela Digna* project was executed in a very authoritarian manner with demands being made upon them with little consultation.

The general secretaries had a positive attitude towards the programme, but they also considered it a PRI project and that they should have had privileged access to its benefits. It seemed automatic that the same people should participate in the two organisations: the PRI is government and the government is the PRI. However, although they were not hostile to PRONASOL, neither did they claim that their communities had benefited much from it. On the whole, Guadalajara seems to have had less attention from the programme than might be expected (Craske, 1993) until the explosions in April 1992, although the state of Jalisco benefited despite being one of the richer states (Rodríguez, 1993).

This positive attitude to government projects does not extend to their views on NAFTA. The most constructive comment that the general secretaries could make was to hope that it would work out well and to consider the possibility that it would create more jobs; however, they believed that what benefits were to come would be concentrated in the northern states. Most were concerned that NAFTA would prejudice Mexico at the expense of the USA; as one said:

‘A México le falta gente capacitada, e inversión nacional. Los empresarios no invierten en renovar maquinaria debido a los altos impuestos del gobierno. México no está listo para entrar en un tratado así, ni en las fábricas ni en el campo’.

This negative assessment was supported by local officials; Zavala considered that there would be benefits stemming from NAFTA, but that they would not filter through to the poorer segments of society for some years. He predicted at least six years, and maybe not even then. Similarly the assessment of Eduardo Rodríguez was sober, suggesting that this was something for the elite and those in the north and Mexico City.

PRONASOL and NAFTA are two elements of the modernisation project of the Salinas administration. So what does ‘modernisation’ mean to the general secretaries? To several, nothing at all. As one put it, ‘*no la aclaran bien lo que quieren... falta de atención a lo antiguo; deben de caminar a mano.*’ Others related it to the changes in the economy, particularly neo-liberal economic policies and the free trade agreement which they doubted would benefit them.<sup>41</sup> For one, modernisation referred to the country’s deeper insertion into the world

capitalist system but added, '*en mi colonia no se nota la modernización; nos falta cosas culturales.*' The worry was that modernisation was going to marginalise certain aspects of Mexican culture and that in developing the modernising project they should '*tomar en cuenta la economía y cultura de México*'. Modernisation, in tandem with NAFTA, was considered as privileging big business at the expense of local companies and businesses; this is of particular concern to people of Guadalajara, a city that is dominated by small businesses.

The general secretaries felt that they had more influence in traditional clientelistic relationships. This allowed them greater familiarity with different power brokers and they were more able to develop personal contacts. For them, democratisation meant people coming up through the ranks and achieving office from which the general secretaries could benefit personally, rather than open elections which could give influence to people outside the committees and give an opening to 'inexperienced' people. This, it was felt, benefited people who had not proven their loyalty to the system and who therefore could not be trusted. For the general secretaries, the democratisation promoted by the modernisers meant a loss of influence and access to benefits and thus eroded their own power in the communities, hence the antipathy. This different attitude to what democratisation means accounts for the different degrees of opening evident at the local level. The most important thing to the local activists was preserving their power bases, which meant that some democratisation measures might be supported while others were rejected. However, in the three years since I began field work with the FCPJ, the number of general secretaries participating has more than halved. The situation in Guadalajara is all the more complicated due to the 1992 explosions and the assassination of the Cardinal in May 1993. These two events have reinforced criticism of the PRI because of the aftermath of the events rather than the events themselves.

## **PRONASOL in Guadalajara**

PRONASOL has been a key strategy in the region, as might be expected. Despite the lack of wide-ranging popular protest activities in the 1980s, Jalisco, one of the federation's wealthier states, has benefited well from the programme (Rodríguez, 1993). However, the organisation of PRONASOL in the state has not been smooth and in many ways the tensions which have emerged, particularly around the disaster relief project in the wake of the 1992 explosions, are typical of the local-centre divide reflected in Eckstein's study (Eckstein, 1990). She comments that local level decentralisation was the crux of the regime's democratisation plans after 1988. Given that decentralisation was key to the Salinas administration's understanding of democratisation (Rodríguez, 1993) and the antagonism of local authorities to this, the example of Guadalajara after April 1992 is a salient one.



PRONASOL functions through both state and federal bodies. As the state capital, Guadalajara has both federal and state PRONASOL offices.<sup>42</sup> However, until the April 1992 explosions, the federal body had not been able to gain a foothold in Guadalajara. The local-centre tensions, which had been mounting up throughout the country, were brought into sharp relief in a very public manner in the aftermath of the explosions. Within hours, Salinas was in Guadalajara promising to give all possible federal assistance to the local agencies to help with the relief operation, but rather than liaise with these he addressed his attentions directly to the victims, thus undermining the authority of the local politicians and agencies, in particular the state governor, Guillermo Cosío Vidaurri, and the municipal president, Enrique Dau Flores. Soon the two PRONASOL agencies became parallel rather than complementary organisations, reflecting the different styles of government; Lomelí (1993) identifies the state agency with more authoritarian styles of organisations, which attempted to control popular participation in decision-making, whilst the federal agencies allowed those affected to have much more autonomy in the process. Consequently, the federal agencies were able to promote a democratising image, which was juxtaposed against the more autocratic style of the regional authorities, further undermining the governor and other local officials. Despite the differences between the two branches, the victims of the disaster identified PRONASOL with the PRI and saw the political consequences of PRONASOL: 'consideran que el partido utiliza el programa de Solidaridad para revitalizarse, para incrementar sus afiliados y recobrar legitimidad. A su juicio, las acciones de Solidaridad tienen como objetivo la recomposición y modernización del partido oficial.' (Lomelí, 1993, p. 242). This lack of distinction between the programme and the party is a reflection of the general secretaries' views above and indicates that the intertwining of the two is not discouraged by either organisation.

The case of the relief effort shows the gap between the two factions within the party and also the tight linking between the party and PRONASOL, to the extent that the different branches of PRONASOL reflect the political structures. Federal bureaucracy promoted local level decentralisation, the inclusion of 'natural leaders' and greater autonomy for grassroots organisations. In comparison, the state bodies pursued a more authoritarian line, where control of possible independent political activity was a key consideration; this was seen as particularly important since many independent organisations were also active in the disaster zone and were lending their expertise in the demand-making process. The attitude of the local agencies was also evident in the handling of the relief effort. Very soon after the explosion, Cosío Vidaurri and Dau Flores ordered heavy digging equipment to be sent in to clear the damaged area. This effectively stopped residents from salvaging any personal goods, but more importantly it stopped the search for people who might have been still alive. Consequently, even those who believe that Cosío Vidaurri was a scapegoat are critical of his use of heavy machinery, which reflected a lack of sensitivity in dealing with the

issue.<sup>43</sup> In this case, the federal authorities won the day with the ousting of Cosío and Dau Flores, although the interim governor, Carlos Rivera Arceves, was not known for being a moderniser. According to the state PRONASOL boss, Mata Bracamontes, the tensions between the two branches of PRONASOL were resolved when an independent body was set up to oversee the disaster relief. However, the *modus operandi* of the state body remains locked in a traditionalist perspective where old practices of clientelism and authoritarianism are reinforced.

As the modernisation project develops, the rhetorical commitment to democratisation has permeated virtually all levels. Consequently, even in those bodies resistant to change, the language of the bureaucrats reflects the reformist venture. The head of PRONASOL in Jalisco, José Luis Mata Bracamontes, is a long-time member of the party, whose father was instrumental in the setting up of the Popular Sector of which he is a member in his professional capacity.<sup>44</sup> He is well known amongst many of the general secretaries and local officials as a party activist. Like many in Guadalajara, he acknowledges the problems in the PRI and sees change as the only option, but is also less enthusiastic about radical change than his counterparts in Mexico City. He welcomes active participation in the setting up of projects, believing that this reinforces a sense of community, but he is also wary of what a fuller democratisation would mean. He represents the 'new' PRI inasmuch as he talks about forging new communities built on co-responsibility and seems genuinely committed to PRONASOL, but the functioning of his office remains steeped in traditions of clientelism and cooptation. Many of those working in his team made it clear that they saw the programme as being directed towards PRI communities and activists to strengthen the party.<sup>45</sup>

Mata Bracamontes accepts the need for change and a different relationship between party and society, requiring a separation of the party from the state. He is aware of certain key areas which need reform: first the party itself; secondly, the need for the government to respond to its citizens in a more consistent manner; thirdly, a reduction in paternalism and clientelism. Having identified these as areas in need of change, he went on to express solutions. He focused on services as a key area and one where the *ad hoc* development of state agencies had created problems that aided protest organisations – very much reflecting the language of Colosio in 1989 (Cornelius et al 1989) – and saw PRONASOL as a solution to the chaotic situation which reigned prior to 1988. He also accepted that the success of PRONASOL was reflected in votes for the PRI, but denies that this is the priority.

When asked about modernisation, he identified three main elements: the development of a legal framework that would regulate municipal activities; the strengthening of the technical expertise of the municipalities so that they might be more capable of raising and managing their own funds; and finally the training

of the populace so that people can understand their rights and responsibilities according to the law. Thus, his assessment reinforces the view that 'modernisation' is concentrated at the level of municipalities rather than larger national questions of accountability. From these responses we can see that his assessment of the problems fits well into the modernisers' vision, but he also demonstrates sympathy with more traditionalist politicians when he takes a very cautious stand on the possibility of effecting change in Jalisco.

He is particularly critical of the way in which the old practices of clientelism and populism have continued and he sees increased popular participation as useful for cutting through the clientelistic networks. Yet, when he explains the functioning of PRONASOL it is evident that the system functions in much the same way. He acknowledges the tradition of *caudillismo* where grassroots members look for strong leaders who will act as conduits between the group and the authorities; in general, independent organisations have tended to reflect this individual dominance as well (Craske, 1993). This detracts from the participatory principle promoted by PRONASOL. The forming of the Solidarity committees also erodes the development of grassroot organisations that encourage the full participation of all. Mata Bracamontes comments that it is easy to form these committees when *promotores* are going into the communities with resources and wish to identify key local activists to develop projects; it is at this point that links are frequently made with existing PRI organisers such as the FCPJ general secretaries that consequently reinforce traditional political practices.

A further problem is that many of the promises regarding PRONASOL projects have been made on the campaign trail, clearly linking PRI candidates with PRONASOL and its benefits. This demonstrates the clientelism to which the programme contributes, as well as fostering the system of individual leaders and making them more important than due process, with the consequent reinforcing of *caudillismo*. Finally, Mata Bracamontes also revealed that he considered democratisation a great risk, since a country full of citizens who know their rights could be destabilising and agreement hard to find.

Despite the packaging of PRONASOL as part of the democratisation project, evidence in support of this is patchy. The general secretaries interviewed certainly saw it as an extension of the PRI with the privileges that it conferred on good *priistas*. The experiences in the aftermath of the 1992 explosions reflected the view that there have been progressive elements at work, but these are easily compensated for by the more reactionary forces. In my own work in the neighbourhoods among independent activists there were many complaints about the project. These included contributions being demanded for them, particularly regarding the *Escuela Digna* programme for renovating school buildings; a repeated complaint was that, despite the propaganda, their contribution was most frequently financial rather than in kind. Another complaint was the way in which the paving of the *colonia* was carried out; a contract was given to residents

stating the amount to be paid, in six monthly instalments, ranging from one to three million (old) pesos (approximately £500-1,500) which was greatly in excess of what could be afforded. One group refused to sign the contract, and thus did not enter into an agreement with the local authorities, but their section of road was still paved. At the time of the fieldwork the issue had not been resolved, but it indicated the problem of pursuing 'co-responsibility' in all projects. A final complaint is that there was often a hazy distinction between what the municipal authorities were providing and what was distributed under the auspices of PRONASOL; this complaint came both from *priistas* and independent activists.<sup>46</sup>

It is clear that Pronasol was involved in projects which communities want. However, it is equally clear that there was an overlap between its task and the tasks of other organisations. This should not be a problem since one is a government project and the other two, FNOC and MT, are PRI organisations. However, since most *priistas* believed that they should have privileged access to PRONASOL funds, they felt marginalised and pushed to one side. On the whole, it appears that in Guadalajara at least PRONASOL more often served as an extra resource for the party than as a tool to promote democratisation. Yet, given that the MT is designed to group together all organisations interested in *gestión social*, including opposition groups and solidarity committees, where does this leave the distinction between MT and Pronasol which also purports to deal with opposition, PRI and non-affiliated groups equally? From the Guadalajara experience it would seem that PRONASOL has done little to break away from the traditional PRI practices of clientelism, arbitrariness and the lack of the clear rule of law; indeed, some evidence points to the contrary. It might have laudable principles, but it is finding it difficult to put them into practice.

At the local level, PRONASOL has still been based on differentiated sectoral activities and few horizontal linkages have been formed. So whilst we see an attempt made at encouraging mass participation in the process of service distribution (which does not take into account the other areas where PRONASOL is active), this attempt is hardly touching the surface, if the information from Guadalajara is generalisable. The new structures which PRONASOL has been promoting have largely been superimposed on already existing PRI organisations. The post-explosion organisation is representative of the modernised corporatism, whilst the PRONASOL committees in other neighbourhoods have frequently become synonymous with the PRI. In Mexico City they seem to ignore the problem of how things are functioning on the ground, dismissing the entrenched nature of clientelism and *caudillos*, and indeed promoting practices which reinforce these if necessary.

## Conclusions

That there were changes during the Salinas *sexenio* is not in doubt, but what is less clear is the direction these changes have taken. Cornelius *et al* identified six possible reform models in 1989, indicating the range of possibilities as well as taking into account that reform might have no particular trajectory; looking back over the *sexenio*, the most prevalent outcome has been the modernisation of authoritarianism. 1988 was a watershed year in Mexican politics, but despite the clear indication that the PRI was under attack and was being forced to liberalise the political system, it was equally obvious that the PRI should not be written off as a political force. In this paper, I have argued that the need for political reform was accepted by virtually all within the party, but the options for change had to be decided from a continuum ranging from a radical overhaul of the party, whereby the party would shed its corporatist identity and become a party of individuals competing in a pluralist system, to an approach which reinforces the party as a terrain of corporatism and reasserts its privileged position in the distribution of resources. The development of the Mexican political system has never been unilinear, but has been continuously renegotiated *vis-à-vis* society. The recent changes result from pressures being exerted upon it by opposition parties, internal shifts and popular protest organisations among other things.

Here I have argued that the pressures have not remained constant and several issues have come into play that have influenced the course of political reform. Salinas began with a progressive discourse, particularly centred on the notion of decentralisation and co-responsibility, which acknowledged the need to 'decorporatise' the party. However, this was prompted as much by economic considerations, particularly with NAFTA in mind, as by political factors. This reformist project was never assured from the beginning, and, as we have seen, it was increasingly strained as different factions within the party jockeyed for position. It is not possible to know exactly what Salinas had in mind with his reform project and, since he confronted many challenges, it was always a risky strategy trying to push through party reform with an attack on entrenched militants. However, what we can detect is a firm path steered in many areas demonstrating that democratisation was not a priority but rather a useful tactic to promote other policies. Indeed, the very form of 'democratisation', through enforced local decentralisation and the functioning of PRONASOL, was to consolidate centralised decision-making and therefore authoritarianism. His handling of many issues, from the ousting of local politicians, outlawing workers' strikes and coopting independent organisations, belies the democratisation argument and indicates a reassertion of authoritarian strategies.

Along with these clear authoritarian tendencies, we also see the reinforcement of corporatism and the control of popular participation which this entails, particularly at the lower levels of organisation. However, it appears that the fate of the PRI itself is uncertain. The failure to make serious changes during this

*sexenio* as a result of the struggles between the 'dinosaurs' and the modernisers could be an indication that attempts to reform the PRI will cease and the party will be allowed to wither away in time with only the old school left on the inside. Despite many reform attempts, particularly in the Popular Sector and the focusing on social issues, the Salinas *sexenio* ended with virtually the same party structures as in 1988. Even the new project of the *Movimiento Territorial* has failed to make an impact – particularly in cities like Guadalajara.

As the party crumbles, PRONASOL has been strengthened and has become increasingly institutionalised with the hope of incorporating as many 'natural leaders' and independent political organisations as possible. Although women are not seen as being as politically threatening as they were in 1988, when they contributed greatly to the popular protest organisations, they continue to be an important part of PRONASOL and an indication of the project's democratic credentials seems to be gauged by the success of *Mujeres en Solidaridad*; incorporating women is a measure of openness and modernity! However, the drop in attention towards women is another indication of how the regime responds only to pressure not principle. The façade of democratisation could also be maintained by allowing continued access to PRONASOL funds to opposition local governments in a limited and strategic way. PRONASOL has been very successful in attracting independent activists, many of whom now work as *promotores* and who attest to the positive effects of the programme. But there are distinct signs that the programme reinforces many of the anti-democratic practices of old, whilst incorporating many new features that reduce costs to the government without expanding access to services, and more importantly decision-making, to a wider group. There is a continuation of clientelism and *caudillismo* and those who have greatest access to the programme appear not to be the poorest but the best organised.

As shown, PRONASOL has modernised corporatism by refocusing the vertical structures on new issues, shifting away from politically sensitive areas such as labour relations and land reform which remain the preserve of the CTM and CNC respectively, and by the notion of co-responsibility. But the collegiate style, emphasised by Parcero and others, is hard to detect at the local level. Consequently, functionally differentiated and vertically structured organisations still permeate political organisation. There is no indication that there is increased accountability of local representatives, the decision-making process is highly centralised and it is very difficult to gauge what criteria are pertinent since decisions remain highly arbitrary and secretive. As the party stands in 1994, many activists at the grassroots are disillusioned and the effectiveness of its organisation must be under question. Talking to the general secretaries in Guadalajara clearly showed that they felt pressure from the party rather than from opposition groups in the neighbourhoods – perhaps this is an indication of how successful the party has been in coopting opposition organisation. But in 1988 many *prístas* defected to the FDN or abstained so the continued support of

grassroots activists cannot be taken for granted, particularly with the current strength of the PAN.

Reforming the PRI has always been a gargantuan task and it remains a moot point whether it could function in a pluralist system. It is clear that many elements within the party fear becoming a 'modern' party premised on individuals rather than mass organisations. Those who fear it more tend to be the regional bosses who have little to gain from liberalisation. However, another major obstacle to party reform is the grassroots itself. The image of the party that the membership have is at odds with the party hierarchy. They have become used to a party which functions in a non-transparent way where personal relationships and contacts are the norm. Playing by the rules may not be in their best interests and since much of what is coming from the centre benefits them very little, it is not surprising that we do not see overwhelming support from the grassroots. Also, given the culture of clientelism and *caudillismo*, it seems difficult to develop a 'societal' corporatist system along West European lines; the 'bottom-up' organisations that have emerged are now being dragged into the fold via PRONASOL rather than the party or repressed. In many ways PRONASOL is beginning to mirror party development, in that there are progressive elements but with massive regional variations where authoritarian enclaves have absorbed the new project. Corporatism need not be anti-democratic if certain criteria are respected such as the rule of law, transparent elections and accountable representatives, but there is no indication that the Mexican political system is ready to take these on board. The desire for First World status appears to be resting solely on economic performance, although the investigation into human rights abuses in Chiapas might give the government the opportunity to prove otherwise.

The party has regained some popular support since its nadir in 1988, but this support is not deeply entrenched, leaving the party vulnerable to extraneous events such as the 1992 explosions, the death of Guadalajara's archbishop and the January uprising in Chiapas where the demands of the rebels gained widespread national support. The Salinas administration gave mixed signals with both liberalisation and entrenchment evident, but the underlying trend has been a reinforcement of central authority, continued arbitrariness and discretion in decision-making, increased personalism, continued electoral reform in an attempt to bolster the PRI and a lack of popular influence in policy-making from party reform to NAFTA. No serious attempt has been made to undermine corporatism; instead, we have a dual corporatist project where one, the PRI has been waning and the other, PRONASOL has been in the ascendancy. Party reform was not prioritised by Salinas and an opportunity for change was lost. Under the new administration of President Zedillo, it seems unlikely that party reform will be any more successful. The 1994 elections have shown how little the political system has changed during the Salinas *sexenio* with corruption, fraud and clientelism still important. There are indications that there has been a degree of opening, but in

a controlled manner and only in one direction (towards an accommodation with the PAN). It is difficult to characterise this as democratisation.<sup>47</sup>

In conclusion, it seems that no group within the PRI really wants to *dismantle* corporatism, rather they want to make the corporatist structures more responsive to their set of priorities – be that modernising the economy or reinforcing *caudillismo*. For all concerned, the control of the masses through efficient socio-political structures is still a useful way of doing that. Yet the structures had stagnated by 1988 and the lack of real change since then would indicate that there is still trouble ahead for the party. A key difference between the two camps is their attitude to the party itself. For the modernisers, the PRI represents a means to an end and consequently it is only useful whilst it is efficient. For the traditionalists, the party is an end in itself in terms of power and careers and thus needs no changes while they can continue to manipulate electoral outcomes; and August 1994 indicates that they can.



## Appendix A

### The Structure of Movimiento Territorial

To establish the organisation an open meeting was called in the neighbourhoods to form a Grassroots Social Committee (*Comité Social de Base*) so that all individuals and groups involved in *gestión social* might attend. The hierarchy believe the results have been good; since they have open elections they have been seen as more credible (*creible*) and they have avoided designating committee members. The five people with the highest votes form the executive committee (*mesa directiva*) and take joint decisions. The structure is horizontal; everybody who participates forms part of the council of the grassroots committee (*consejo de comité de base*). For every 100 voters the group has the right to send a delegate to sit on the municipal level executive committee. There need to be at least 50 people to call a neighbourhood assembly. There is a cumulative effect: the municipal executive can send two members to the state level assembly, likewise two members from each state go to the national directive council (*órgano de dirección nacional*). The National Congress has two representatives from each municipality. The Standing Commission (*Comisión Permanente*) also has two members for each state, i.e. 64 members. Everything is based on a collegiate system, including the work commissions which decide and carry out projects in the neighbourhoods. The links are horizontal in an attempt to avoid dependence on central resource distribution.

## Notes

1. Ernesto Zedillo claimed victory with only 15% of the votes counted.
2. That is, Salinas won 50.36% of 55% of registered voters leaving him with 27.7% of the electorate supporting him. This does not account for those who had not registered to vote. Furthermore, the PRI failed to win its usual two-thirds majority needed for making constitutional amendments; the 1988-1991 legislature is the only one in which the PRI has not had this advantage, which resulted in political alliances with the right-wing PAN in order to make constitutional amendments.
3. The failure was all the more embarrassing since traditional leaders such as Jonguitud Barros of the teachers' union had promised to turn out eight million votes for the PRI. In the event the teachers defected in large numbers to the FDN.
4. The debate surrounding the links between reform of the system and reform of the party has been going on for some time. Lorenzo Meyer has suggested that perhaps reforming the PRI is a 'mission impossible' (Meyer, 1989).
5. This desire is illustrated by Mexico's successful application to join the OECD and the signing of NAFTA.
6. These tensions within the party are amply illustrated over the party's presidential nomination for the 1994 elections. First, there was the tension between Colosio and Camacho Solis that highlights the tensions between the two factions; although both had good relations equally with the President and the party, Camacho originally came out in defence of the corporate structures, albeit a reformed version. Since the events in Chiapas in January 1994, he has been seen increasingly as a moderniser in favour of radical democratisation policies which resulted in him overshadowing the then presidential candidate before his untimely death. After Colosio's assassination in March 1994, the decision over who should replace him indicated further tensions between the party faithful and the hierarchy. In the end the economist Zedillo won out over the party choice of Ortiz Arana, signalling the continuation of the neo-liberal economic project. In order to gain more support within the party, Zedillo courted the hardliners.
7. There were several changes of General Secretary during the course of this administration.
8. Whilst I do not wish to overdraw the dualism of reformers/traditionalists equals Mexico City/the regions, in the case of Guadalajara, where the fieldwork was carried out, the local *priistas* are more strongly represented by the traditionalists and the modernising policies are seen as coming from a clique

close to the President in Mexico City.

9. Jonathan Fox describes authoritarian clientelism as a situation 'where imbalanced bargaining relations require the enduring political subordination of clients and are reinforced by the threat of coercion' (1994, p. 153).

10. GDP growth slowed in the second half of the *sexenio*, dropping to only 0.4% in 1993, consequently throwing the government's forecasts off balance; the recession continued despite renewed buoyancy in the USA. Another problem has been how to change speculative capital into productive investment (Barkin, 1992).

11. This is obviously not intended to be an exhaustive list of the changes and reforms undertaken by the Salinas Administration, but only those most relevant for this paper.

12. *Convenios* are agreements reached by the in-coming administration with some of the more powerful popular protest organisations with the view to undermining potential alliances with the newly formed PRD; one such case is the agreement between the government and the *Comité de Defensa Popular de Durango* (CDP) which has since won regional level representation (Haber, 1993). Eckstein identifies a similar *convenio* between the government and the 1985 earthquake victims, commenting that although the recipients of aid were no longer expected to affiliate to the party, they nevertheless lose their social bases (1990).

13. The PRD in particular has suffered with large numbers of its members being harassed and several have been killed, particularly in rural areas. Journalists and lawyers involved in human rights cases have also been subject to repression and ultimately death. The CNDH may have the chance to show its worth in the investigations into human rights abuses in the early days of the Chiapas uprising in January 1994.

14. Only the PAN has had its governorship wins recognised in the states of Baja California, Chihuahua and Guanajuato (as an interim) whilst the PRD failed to have its claims of victory accepted. In 1989 the Michoacán state legislature was elected on the same day as the Baja California gubernatorial elections. The PRD was awarded six out of eighteen seats. However, many believe that it won at least another eight seats and that in the remaining four fraud was so bad that it was impossible to say who had won them. Similarly in 1992 the governorship election was held the same day as the Chihuahua election and again it appears that widespread fraud was used, which was not the case in the PAN stronghold.

15. Tarrés illustrates the non-democratic credentials of 'a significant minority' of PAN supporters in the Mexico City suburb of El Satélite where between 25 and 37 per cent said 'that left-wing party militants, illiterates, the unemployed,

and the indigenous population *did not* have the same political rights (afforded the rest of society)' (1990, p. 146, emphasis in the original).

16. Jeffrey Rubin argues that corporatism had never been especially effective in Juchitán, Oaxaca, allowing the first left-wing municipal government to take power in the 1970s when the COCEI (*Coalición Obrera Campesina Estudiantil del Istmo*) won the elections (Rubin, 1990). However, it was not allowed to remain in power long.

17. The CTM leader's attempts at thwarting party reform encouraged some members of the *Corriente Democrática* to threaten resignation whilst other *priistas* joined the *Corriente* (Morris, 1992, p. 40). The XIV party assembly in 1990 was characterised by these issues.

18. Given that the tensions between the two camps are frequently drawn along centre-region distinctions (footnote 8 notwithstanding), governors have a strategic importance since they 'can resist reform efforts in the name of federalism' (Fox, 1994, p. 175). Thus, they can be a key resource for the traditionalists resulting in a number of removals by the president including Jalisco and Tabasco. It is also worth noting that the interior minister, who was removed in the aftermath of the Zapatista uprising in January 1994, was a former governor of Chiapas renowned for his hardline attitudes.

19. The latest round of electoral reforms in 1994 did change funding regulations, but have yet to have any real impact. The most radical change was the imposition of ceilings on campaign expenditure. However, the ceilings were way above what any of the opposition parties could afford anyway.

20. The PRI has many names for residents' committees: *comités de vecinos*, and *juntas de mejoras* being two used in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Zone (ZMG).

21. The other two were a faction within the official SNTE the *Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación* (CNTE) and the *Coordinadora Nacional 'Plan Ayala'* (CNPA), a peasant organisation. All three had been founded during 1979-1980.

22. This is not to say that there was not an exchange between the two experiences and the identity-centred approach of the social movements theoreticians has proved to be useful in the analysis of popular movements in Mexico (see Foweraker and Craig, 1990, for examples).

23. Interview with Dra Cecilia Ruiz, Secretary of New Social Movements of the Federation of Popular Organisations of Jalisco (FOPJ) 1989.

24. This is a document published by the PRI simply entitled *Movimiento Territorial* given to me by Arq. José Parcero López. It does not appear in the

## Bibliography.

25. Interview with the author 1 July 1993.
26. The Residents' Committees, which are currently members of the FNOC in Jalisco, fall outside the formal structure of the sector, but are incorporated as 'extraordinary' members.
27. Information from an interview with José Parceró López 1 July 1993.
28. This will be discussed below in relation to Guadalajara.
29. Yucatán was at the centre of some controversy in early summer 1993 over plans to reschedule the gubernatorial elections. The PAN had had considerable success here and it was quite possible that the incumbent mayor of Mérida, *panista* Ana Rosa Payán would run for, and quite possibly win, the seat. The elections coincided with the 1994 presidential elections and as such were considered a potential rallying point for the opposition. The solution for the PRI was to bring forward the governorship elections to November 1993. It was hoped that the rescheduling of the elections would detract from the PAN's support and in the event blatant fraud was used against the PAN. This use of fraud, given that the PAN 'had been cooperating closely with the government since 1989, was particularly shocking' (Cornelius, 1994, p. 58).
30. This is in contrast with what the programme identifies as 'traditional politics' consisting of vertical organisations, sectoral concerns, macro-level agreements, depersonalised treatment and sectoral units (*Programa Estratégico*).
31. During the few years of the Salinas administration there was a team of *priistas* who researched the literature on social movements and displayed an impressive grasp of the issues developed by researcher/activists such as Ramírez Saíz and Pedro Moctezuma. I believe this to be a key feature of the party's ability to undermine popular organisations.
32. Ex-General Secretary of the Popular Sector, Lic. Silvia Hernández, commented privately that a study carried out by the PRI indicated that the PRONASOL was actually damaging the party electorally. This study was repressed by Salinas and Hernández now regrets that it was never published.
33. See Cornelius *et al* (1994) for a collection of essays with various interpretations of its significance.
34. Rather than resigning, both men asked for licence to be absent from duties for an indefinite period. In this way new elections were avoided.

35. In a country where conspiracy theories abound, many blamed the death on the PRI itself, suggesting the Cardinal was too involved in politics and planned to support the establishment of a Christian Democrat party. Others thought that he would become the next Cardinal of Mexico City; as a supposed sympathiser of the right, this would not please many in the PRI. These criticisms of a lack of a credible investigation were echoed a year later when Colosio was assassinated in Tijuana – a town where again drugs could be a useful smokescreen.

36. Although maybe not as clearly as he had anticipated. He believed that the subsequent National Assembly of the Popular Sector would dissolve the 'citizen network' within the Sector, which is synonymous with the modernisers' influence; in the event it failed to do this, indicating that the modernisers still have some influence.

37. It is worth noting that, prior to his appointment as leader of the party in Guadalajara, Zavala had been Director of *Participación Ciudadana*, a department within City Hall in charge of coordinating the distribution of services to neighbourhoods within the municipality of Guadalajara. This allowed highly discretionary decisions to be made to the advantage of those participating in the FCPJ as part of a cooptation strategy to isolate independent organisations (Craske, 1993).

38. There appears to be no set structure to the neighbourhood committees, with the executive positions ranging from three to about ten. The only common positions seem to be general secretary, treasurer, secretary and women's officer, although this latter position is rarely filled.

39. The *Coalición Nacional de Agrupaciones Productivas y de Servicios*; a constituent member of the FNOC. Whilst the FCPJ is a member of FNOC, it is an extraordinary member since it does not fit into one of the three branches: see Figure 5 above.

40. PRONASOL's involvement in the clear-up operation resulted in problems for the programme itself, leading to rows between the regional PRONASOL and federal PRONASOL leaders – both of whom had offices in Guadalajara: see below in section on PRONASOL.

41. It is worth noting that the anti-NAFTA sentiments of the Zapatista rebels active in southern Mexico in early 1994 were supported by the majority of the population, according to many opinion polls in the press at the time.

42. This paragraph draws on Lomelí 1993.

43. It was also rumoured that Cosío owned the heavy machinery used in the relief operation and therefore would have benefited financially from their use.

44. Two interviews were conducted with Mata Bracamontes in June 1993 from which the following information is derived.

45. These impressions were not assuaged when the promised figures regarding PRONASOL spending in Jalisco and how the funds were distributed were not forthcoming despite many promises.

46. I was given the official records for expenditure by the Guadalajara municipality during the Covarrubias Ibarra administration (1989-92). It may be worth noting that Covarrubias warned against seeing PRONASOL as a panacea for all situations of service provision in the neighbourhoods. It would be interesting to see if both bodies claimed to be funding the same projects, given that many local neighbourhood organisations (including local PRI members) seemed to think that this was the case.

47. Many observers point to a pact between the PAN and the PRI in which the PAN plays the role of loyal opposition in return for positions in government such as the governorships. The PAN's presidential candidate, Fernando Diego de Cevallos, made a strong showing in opinion polls leading up to the elections, particularly after the televised debate between the main candidates in May, but towards the end of the campaign he became very lacklustre and accepted Zedillo's claims of victory almost immediately despite his reservations about the electoral process. 'Today more than ever a modern system of manipulation of the news, of deformation of the truth, of falsification of information was used' (quoted in *The Independent*, 23 August 1994). These criticisms are considerably stronger than those expressed by Cárdenas.

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